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"Strategic use of Social Media"

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Dedication

“Let’s do what we love and do a lot of it”

Thank you to my family and my beautiful friends, who believed and supported me. I would like to express my enormous appreciation to my boyfriend Alois, who gave me a huge support and because of him, I finished my thesis before the deadline.

I would also like to thank my supervisor for support and inspiration!

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'W. J.' or similar, written in a cursive style.

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Abstract

This thesis, titled "Strategic Use of Social Media," provides an in-depth analysis of social media dynamics, with particular emphasis on the B2C hospitality sector, offering valuable insights for businesses operating in the Russian market. The introductory chapters establish the foundation by outlining the importance of social media and the possibility for collaboration with celebrities and influencers.

Delving into the literature in Chapter II, the study explores the evolution of social media, various marketing methods, and advanced techniques for both B2B and B2C situations. Chapter III concentrates on the B2C hospitality sector, providing a comprehensive SWOT analysis and examining consumer behaviour, social media platforms, technology integration, and international perspectives.

The conclusion summarises substantial findings, highlighting the primary objective of understanding the challenges and solutions in the B2C hospitality sector, specifically tailored for the Russian market. The evaluation of the Russian market illustrates the requirement of adaptable strategies that deal with the region's unique characteristics and challenges. Insights regarding social media interactions with incoming visitors, domestic travellers, and the Russian hospitality sector contribute to an improved understanding of this specific environment.

The analysis further reveals a diverse range of techniques for building an effective social media presence on different social media platforms. Additionally, the evaluation of glamping pages provides a thematic focus, demonstrating innovative engagement methods while also underlining the adaptability and diversity of social media techniques within the broader hospitality sector.

In essence, this thesis makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of social media dynamics in the B2C hospitality sector, while shedding light on challenges and opportunities specific to the Russian market. The assessment of glamping pages serves as a practical resource, highlighting the versatility and creativity required for successful social media campaigns in the dynamic and ever-changing hospitality industry.

Introduction

The intended purpose of this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of social media on B2B and B2C businesses, with a particular emphasis on the hospitality sector in the Russian market. The thesis is divided into four chapters, each of which addresses a specific aspect of the strategic use of social media.

Initially, we did some extensive research on the general definitions and concepts of social media, as well as its background and history. We discovered two types of classification of social media channels and talked more deeply about each of the types. One of the focuses of the thesis was enterprise social media, and we talked about its definition and main characteristics. The main objectives were detected and underlined in this chapter.

It was also noted the importance of social networks for B2B and B2C businesses, as in today's world more and more people start to use social networks on a daily basis, which means that every day more and more customers can be attracted and found on different online platforms. We also considered the importance of using alternative techniques to maintain social media accounts, for instance, collaborating with celebrities, bloggers, and influencers, as well as utilising current trends. As practice shows, the opinion of various celebrities online is important to their audience, and a collaboration with a blogger can be a good lever for more recognition or sales. Also in this section, we learned about the difference in characteristics between mega-, micro-, macro-influencers, as well as about niche-focused influencers

Furthermore, there was a section dedicated to illustrating the differences between running a profile for B2B and B2C businesses. The second chapter shows a review of the discovered literature and mentions aspects relevant to social media strategies. The data used for this research was obtained from scientific articles and specialised websites. The evolution of social media in business was first mentioned. Then we broke down concepts such as social media marketing (SMM) as well as the goals of SMM. Following this, the most popular social applications among users and then among marketing professionals were established. This data gave an insight into how marketing works in today's world and which social networks to focus on. Then, we looked at the concept of the life cycle in marketing and analysed each of the six steps of this cycle in more detail. Afterwards, we made a table of the advantages and disadvantages of social media marketing. Later, concepts like B2B and B2C and social media ownership in different business sectors were explored. We learned which social media networks have more influence in B2B and B2C and went through the main functions and features of these social media networks. Next, the main trends in social media marketing were discovered, and the differences and criteria between marketing in B2B and B2C were reviewed. At the end of the second chapter, a basic example of social media strategy, including SMART goals and the main KPI, was given, which is the basis for maintaining an online page for a brand.

The third chapter focuses on social media in B2C and, to be more specific, the hospitality industry as a whole. The chapter starts with an overview of the hospitality industry, the types of facilities in hospitality, and the main factors that influence operational procedures and decisions. Then a SWOT analysis was done with a focus on social media in hospitality.

Later on, the influence of social media on the way a potential customer behaves and the technological integration in today's online world were analysed.

Afterwards, a detailed analysis of international and domestic prospects for the hospitality market in Russia was made. It was revealed which countries' residents come to Russia most often, what favours the arrival of tourists to Russia, as well as solutions that will help to attract more tourists to Russia in the current situation.

Then, the bias of the thesis was directed towards the Russians themselves, who choose their own country for their holidays. Methods that will help the government attract more tourists through social media were also mentioned.

At the end of this chapter, we examined three case studies in the field of glamping on the three most popular social networks in Russia. For each case study, a social media page was reviewed, and tips for maintaining a page on each social network were given.

The end of the thesis includes a conclusion and references.

The aim of the research is to pose the question:

"How do visual representations on social media platforms influence consumer behaviour and choices in the hospitality sector, along with what role does the integration of visually appealing content play in optimising the effectiveness of social media strategies for businesses in this industry?"

Chapter I

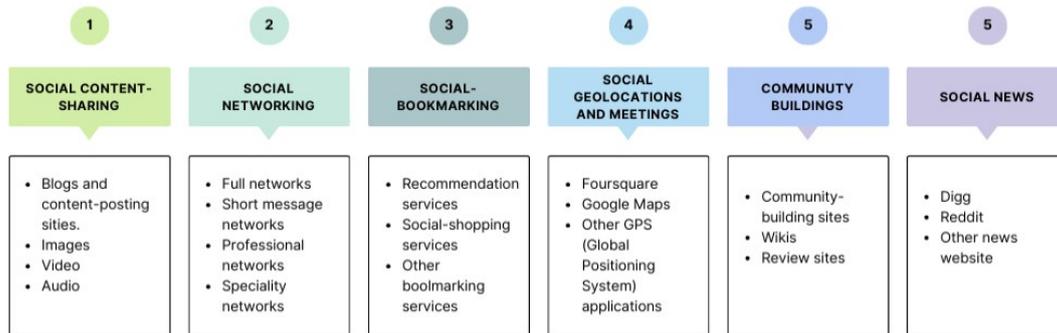
1.1.1 Introduction to Social Media

The use of social media has grown in the last decade. The collection of interactive online tools known as social media makes it easier for users to create, curate, and share material, whether individually or in groups. They are a part of daily life that is becoming more and more prevalent. Social media can be seen as an essential component of an intricately connected social environment rather than as something apart from the real world. "Sites where users actively participate to determine what is popular" is one of the core definitions of social media. ([Davis 2016](#)) "new forms of media that involve active interaction and participation among its users" - is another description. ([Manning, 2014](#)) In the digital economy, social media is starting to be seen as a crucial marketing tool for businesses. It is anticipated that social media use will alter how business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) marketers engage, communicate, consume, and produce both inside and outside of their respective organisations. ([Vize and Sherrett, 2017](#))

As social media provides a variety of channels to meet different communication needs and preferences, it has become an essential part of our everyday lives. Social media channels are categorised using a variety of criteria, including user demographics, content format, and purpose. This classification helps consumers select platforms based on their interests, but it also gives marketers and organisations important information about which channels are best for their target market. Information on how social media channels are categorised in this overview according to various standards, providing insight into the diverse environment that influences our online interactions, will be presented below. Generally, there are two main classifications: the first is made by [Kaplan and Haenlein \(2010\)](#) and it is based on social presence and media richness (low, medium, high), self-presentation and self-disclosure (low, high).

Figure 1: Classification of Social Media Channels

CLASSIFICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS



Source: Authors' creation, based on previous literature and industry reports [Kaplan and Haenlein \(2010\)](#)

- *Social content-sharing channels*: provide posting and commenting on text, videos, photos, and podcasts. Usually, these kinds of channels are blogs and content-posting websites (WordPress, Blogger, Medium, and Tumblr); video (YouTube, Tiktok); images (Flickr, Snapchat, SlideShare, Pinterest); and podcasts (Podbean, BlogTalkRadio).
- *Social networking channels*: these platforms enable sharing private content with friends and family, including messages and images, and they also provide business services. Full networks (Facebook and Google Plus), short message networks (Twitter), professional networks (LinkedIn), and specialist networks (Quora, a Q&A website) are examples of social networking channels.
- *Social-bookmarking channels*: give consumers the option to search, store, and arrange web pages. Recommendation services (StumbleUpon, Delicious), social purchasing services (Wanelo, ThisNext), and other bookmarking services are examples of social bookmarking channels.
- *Social Geolocation and Meeting Channels*: The channels include Meetups, Foursquare, and other GPS (Global Positioning System) applications—bring people together in real space.
- *Community-building channels*: There are a lot of commenting and resource-sharing websites on these channels. In particular, these channels include message boards and forums, which are excellent examples. These consist of social networking platforms like Ning, wikis like Wikipedia, and review websites like Yelp and TripAdvisor.
- *Social News channels*: User-posted stories are featured on social news websites (Digg, Reddit).

Another type of classification is created by [Rajesh and Rangaiah \(2020\)](#), and includes six different social media classes:

- 1) Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia);
- 2) Content communities (e.g., YouTube);
- 3) Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft);
- 4) Blogs;
- 5) Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook);
- 6) Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)

In the era of digitization and technology, the strategic use of social media is an essential step in the life of organisations, entrepreneurs and users, not only in a way of communication between each other but also in a way to promote, sell and get to know the products and services. Every year more and more opportunities are presented by social media platforms and this thesis will be focused on the strategic deployment of social media, showing how companies expand their profiles to achieve brand presence and integrate with potential audiences. Also, it explores how firms formulate and manage social media strategies in alignment with broader communication and business objectives.

The main focus of the thesis is Enterprise Social Media (hereafter, ESM), the definition of which is: Web-based platforms that allow workers to

1. communicate messages with specific coworkers or broadcast messages to everyone in the organisation;
2. explicitly indicate or implicitly reveal particular coworkers as communication partners;
3. post, edit, and sort text and files linked to themselves or others; and
4. view the messages, connections, text, and files communicated, posted, edited and sorted by anyone else in the organisation at any time of their choosing. ([Liu and Bakici, 2019](#))

The use of ESM as a marketing tool has enlarged in recent years, by having an opportunity to reach millions of potential customers all over the world with brand-related content and integrate the communication into a deal. ([Hanna et al., 2011](#), [Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016](#))

Background

The real start of social media can be traced back to the turn of the 21st century, with platforms like Friendster and MySpace laying the groundwork for what would become a revolutionary shift in how individuals and entities connect online ([Boyd and Ellison, 2007](#)). This early phase was marked by experimentation, as platforms sought to define their identity and purpose in the burgeoning digital landscape.

The beginning of the 2000s was a stage of rise in platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, which began the era of microblogging. Later on, Snapchat and Instagram contributed to the ways of sharing content, especially “life content” which showed the followers the real picture of what was happening with a user. After years, these social media apps changed the perspective of posting live and changed their strategy.

Objectives

1. To analyse the historical background of social media applications and their impact on digital communication.
2. To examine the key tools of effective social media strategies, including factors such as audience segmentation, content creation, and platform selection.
3. To determine the role of social media in brand management as well as reputation building, and crisis communication.
4. To compare social media strategies both in B2B and B2C sectors
5. To focus on successful cases in the Hospitality sector
5. To identify emerging trends and technologies shaping the future of social media strategies.

1.2.1 Background and History

Social media nowadays is a big part of integration and communication in the society. That’s a way not only for chatting, posting and sharing information and pictures, but also it is an essential tool in a business field, that companies use to introduce users to their product, as well as integration, promotion and sales.

Social media has a quite long journey to go, definitely longer than we can imagine. The first mention of Social Media was back in 1844 when a series of electronic dots and dashes tapped out by hand on a telegraph machine. ([Maryville University, 2020](#))

The evaluation of Social media has a great path. Social Media overcame many transformations in digital and technological changes from the beginning to the present era.

- *The Early Years (1970s–1990s)*

Social media has its origins in the early years of computer networking. CompuServe and Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) were two of the early online platforms that enabled users to share files and messages in the 1970s. However, the phrase "Social Media" did not become widely used until the 1990s.

SixDegrees.com was one of the first well-known social networking sites to appear in 1997. It established the foundation for the idea of social networking by enabling users to make profiles and connect with friends. Even though SixDegrees was eventually shut down in 2001, it paved the way for other platforms.

- *Blogging' rise in the Early 2000s*

The early 2000s saw the rise in popularity of blogging platforms such as Blogger and LiveJournal, which allowed people to express their ideas, opinions, and experiences to a worldwide audience. Friendster was the first contemporary social networking site to combine friends, news feeds, and profiles. It was created in 2002 and marked a key milestone.

- *Mobile Revolution (late 2000s)*

The emergence of smartphones in the late 2000s significantly changed the social media environment. The visual component of content sharing was leveraged by apps like Instagram (2010) and Snapchat (2011), which helped to start the trend of sharing and posting live.

- *2010s: Integration and Diversification*

Platforms for social media started adding new features as they developed. Facebook increased its power in the market by acquiring WhatsApp in 2014 and Instagram in 2012. Pinterest drew people with its emphasis on visual exploration, while LinkedIn cemented its place as the leading professional networking platform.

In addition, worries about fake news, privacy, and the effect of social media on mental health came into sharp relief in the 2010s, leading to heightened scrutiny and proposals for regulation.

- *Present Situation (2020s)*

The social media landscape is still changing in the 2020s. New features and platforms appear, and social media usage in moderation is still a topic of conversation in society. Companies are interested in learning more about the metaverse, an interconnected virtual realm, and how it might affect social relationships. ([Boyd and Ellison, 2007](#))

Figure 2: The evaluation of Social Media era



Source: Authors' creation, based on previous literature and industry reports [Boyd and Ellison \(2007\)](#)

The rise of blogging starting in the 2000s was an essential stage in the social media world, - from that period on, it started to gain widespread popularity.

Friendster, launched in 2002, played a main role in introducing and developing the concept of creating profiles and making connections online. Then, later in 2003, Myspace overstepped Friendster by adding features such as music sharing and customising personal pages. That was an enormous expansion in the net, attracting people globally and making them have connections all over the world.

Facebook's Meteoric Rise (Mid-2000s)

Global social media “Facebook” was launched in 2004 and initially could and was used only by Harvard students. From the university platform with a news feed, Facebook expanded beyond different college campuses. Facebook included new features such as a tab for professionals and business [\(Boyd and Ellison, 2007\)](#)

The era of short thoughts and microblogging began with Twitter (now “X”) in 2006. Social media had the ability for users to share in news feeds brief and short real-time thoughts and updates.

This unique format rapidly expanded globally with a broad audience, introducing a new way of communication and information sharing. Due to its ease of use and adaptability, Twitter gained popularity quickly, making trending topics and hashtags essential parts of online conversation [\(Baker, 2018\)](#).

Visual Storytelling era by Instagram (2010)

Instagram is the developer of visual content. From the beginning, it was a platform where you could take real-time pictures and share them on the news feed, adding filters and hashtags. With time, it started to expand the features by making it possible to post photos and videos from your camera roll, adding location, making live streams and creating reels. Acquisition by Facebook in 2012 made the company a main player in storytelling and visual landscape [\(Kuyucu, Mihalis, 2020\)](#)

Snapchat showed a new approach by implementing a feature that allows all posts of videos and pictures to disappear after a short time. The application was launched in 2011, and younger audiences were especially drawn to this idea since it subverted preconceived beliefs about internet permanence and changed the way people share events.

Mobile-First Era and WhatsApp (2010s)

The increasing prevalence of smartphones in the 2010s further accelerated the popularity of social media. WhatsApp, founded in 2009 and acquired by Facebook in 2014, became a global messaging giant, emphasising instant communication and group interactions. ([Ortiz-Ospina, 2019](#))

Conclusion

The evolution of social media from the early 2000s to the 2010s reflects a dynamic interplay of technological innovation, user engagement, and the changing landscape of online communication. The pivotal moments discussed here showcase how platforms evolved, introducing new features and formats that shaped the social media landscape we know today.

1.3.1 Significance of Social Media in B2B and B2C Sectors

The strategic use of social media has become a transforming force for organisations in a variety of sectors in the ever-changing realm of digital communication. Social media has evolved into a vital tool for businesses looking to build their online presence and engage in meaningful conversations, from enabling direct consumer contact to promoting business-to-business professional networking. Even 10 years ago, companies would never have believed that having social media accounts for their enterprises would help them to have worldwide awareness and increase sales. Not only is social media revolutionising the research skills of brand researchers, but it has also completely altered the sales funnel, upending almost every facet of the consumer experience.

Below is an exploration of the enormous impact that social media has had on the business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) sectors. It highlights how these platforms have changed marketing tactics, customer interactions, and the dynamics of modern commerce as a whole.

1. Getting Around the Digital Landscape: B2C to B2B

Social media has made it more difficult to distinguish between traditional B2C and B2B communication tactics, ushering in a new era in which companies operate on the same digital landscape regardless of who their target audience is. B2C companies use social media sites like Facebook and Instagram to expand their reach, increase engagement, and cultivate brand loyalty as consumers seek more genuine and tailored interactions with brands. ([Smith, Chen et](#)

[al., 2012](#)) Meanwhile, in the B2B space, sites like LinkedIn have grown to be essential for professionals and companies looking to network, exchange industry knowledge, and develop thought leadership. ([Nagy, 2017](#))

2. Beyond Marketing: Establishing Credibility and Partnerships

Social media is important in ways that go beyond conventional marketing theories. Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter have transformed customer service in the business-to-consumer (B2C) space by offering instantaneous channels for answering questions and concerns. ([Hanna, Rohm et al., 2011](#))

In the B2B space, LinkedIn acts as a hub for professional networking as well as a means of fostering enduring bonds and establishing credibility among colleagues in the same field. ([Wamba, Akter et al., 2015](#))

3. Data analytics and strategic insights

The capacity of social media to offer organisations priceless data and insights is one of its unique advantages. Organisations can gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of customer behaviour, preferences, and market trends by utilising analytics tools that are integrated into popular platforms like Facebook and Twitter. ([Wang, Chunling et al., 2012](#))

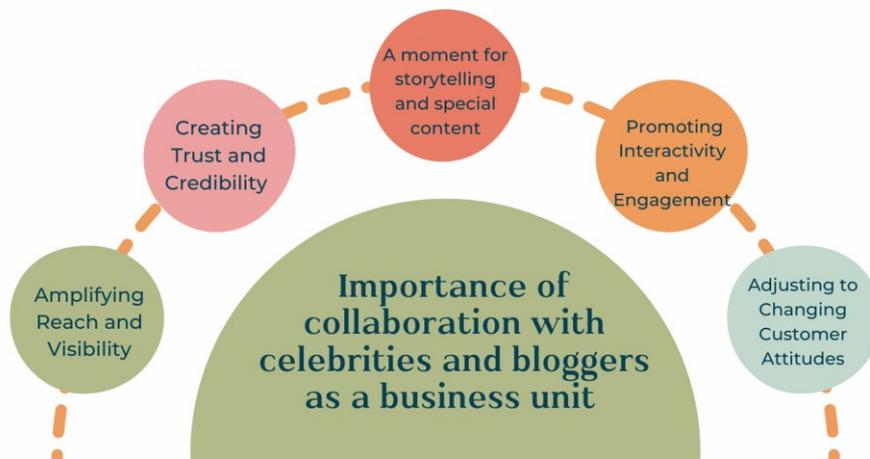
4. Client Support

Another aspect of why it is essential to have social media for your business is that customers can easily reach you whenever there is some issue with your service or product. It makes your company be service-oriented, which also makes the firm, be more friendly-trusted. Even though all businesses, B2B or B2C, should try to avoid troubles, it helps a buyer decide what to buy if they can see how well-managed the company is through social media. Stronger client relationships are facilitated by providing excellent service and efficiently solving problems. From another view, that gives your company control over the situation, showing the quality and efficiency of the enterprise. ([Smith, Chen et al., 2012](#))

1.3.2 Importance of collaboration with celebrities and influencers as a business unit

Collaborating with influencers and celebrities on social media has become a strategic imperative for both B2B and B2C entities. This collaboration goes beyond traditional marketing approaches, leveraging the influence and reach of online personalities to enhance brand recognition, credibility, and appeal. Here are some reasons why it is important to do that as a brand:

Figure 3: Importance of collaboration with celebrities and bloggers as a business unit



Source: Authors' creation, based on previous literature and industry reports [Smith, Chen et al., \(2012\)](#); [Jannat and Shaika, \(2018\)](#); [Ibáñez-Sánchez, Flavián et al., \(2022\)](#), [Li and Charlene, \(2010\)](#)

1. Amplifying Reach and Visibility

In the highly competitive digital landscape, collaboration with bloggers and celebrities enables businesses to tap into established audiences. Bloggers and celebrities often have a significant and dedicated following on social media platforms, providing businesses with the opportunity to amplify their reach beyond their usual audience. This expanded reach is particularly valuable for both B2B and B2C businesses seeking to enhance brand visibility and gain exposure in crowded markets. [\(Smith, Chen et al., 2012\)](#)

2. Creating Trust and Credibility

In their specialised fields, bloggers and celebrities frequently have a great deal of trust and influence. A portion of that credibility can be transferred to the company by working with these influencers in the B2B and B2C sectors. A reputable person's endorsement can assist in establishing credibility with the public and improve their opinion of the brand. This is especially important in fields where decision-making heavily relies on reputation and trust. [\(Jannat and Shaika, 2018\)](#).

3. A moment for storytelling and special content

Authenticity is crucial in the era of informed customers and ad-blockers. Genuine and relatable content creation is a skill that bloggers and celebrities frequently possess. Through partnerships, companies can incorporate their goods and services into real-world stories, which increases the audience's interest in and attraction to the promotional material. This narrative technique works well for drawing in both decision-makers and customers. [\(Ibáñez-Sánchez, Flavián et al., 2022\)](#)

4. Promoting Interactivity and Engagement

Bloggers and celebrities frequently have very involved fans who take part in conversations and exchanges. Working with influencers creates conversations about the brand and allows for direct audience involvement. Both B2B and B2C companies benefit from this degree of interaction since it raises brand awareness and provides real-time feedback and insights.

[\(Ibáñez-Sánchez, Flavián et al., 2022\)](#)

5. Adjusting to Changing Customer Attitudes

Influencers are increasingly important in influencing consumers' purchase decisions as consumer behaviour changes. Businesses can better match themselves with today's customer trends and preferences by collaborating with bloggers and celebrities. Influencer partnerships are important in the professional sphere since thought leaders and industry experts also have an impact on decision-makers in B2B transactions. [\(Li and Charlene, 2010\)](#)

In conclusion, in the digital age, working with bloggers and celebrities has become an essential business approach. It gives companies the chance to expand their audience, build their reputation, produce real content, encourage interaction, and adjust to shifting consumer preferences.

The public's perspective and the processes involved in making decisions can be greatly impacted by the credibility and power that these online personas possess in their respective industries. Their ability to produce authentic and accessible material enables organisations to express their story more appealingly, attracting both decision-makers and customers.

Additionally, the interactive aspect of these partnerships encourages a greater degree of audience participation and gives companies insightful feedback. These partnerships help firms stay aware of the latest trends and preferences as consumer behaviour changes over time.

As a result, the value of cooperating with celebrities and bloggers cannot be overemphasised, as it has become an essential component of successful company strategies in both the B2B and B2C sectors.

Society has been familiar with the fact that celebrities advertise the product of a brand since childhood - in fact, at first, this integration between celebrity and brand was particularly sought after on TV or on a banner. And we were all more likely to buy some product that was advertised by our favourite actor. Now, in addition to film stars, famous singers and showmen, there is a new niche called influencers, who carry significant weight in the marketing world. They are invited to film festivals and fashion weeks; they become ambassadors of different companies; or they even interact with the brand to come up with a common product. So who are influencers, and what are they like?

Social media influencers are users who have the ability to affect people’s decisions in some way ([Haenlein and Libai, 2017](#)) and who have a powerful number of followers on social media ([de Veirman, Cauberghe et al., 2017](#)).

Most influencers are well-known for their lifestyle, opinions, thoughts, and recommendations. That is their approach to catching the user and triggering him in a positive or negative way. ([Ki and Kim, 2019](#)).

Influencer marketing has evolved into a diversified ecology, with influencers differing in size, engagement, and niche specialisation. Understanding the different types of influencers and matching them to a brand's values and target audience is critical to the success of joint efforts. This section goes deeper into the distinctions between influencer types and the importance of brand alignment. According to [Haenlein & Libai, \(2017\)](#) there are several types of influencers:

- Mega influencers, who also known as experts in a certain field
- Micro influencers, who affect people on a small circle
- Macro influencers. According to [Campbell and Farrell \(2020\)](#), there are two categories: celebrities, which are people who are well-known both nationally and internationally outside of the social media sphere, and nano-influencers, which are people who advocate locally or close to specialised audiences.

The table below shows a more detailed description of the definitions of micro-, macro-, and mega influencers:

Table 1: Description of the definitions of micro-, macro-, and mega influencers

Characteristic/ Definition	Micro-influencers	Macro-influencers	Mega-influencers
Followers	1000 - 100 000	100 001- 1000 000	1 000 000 <
Characteristics	Local authority; a strong voice in a certain group or niche. They build a strong bond with a consistent audience. The audience perceived them as highly credible.	Significant number of committed followers. A more varied audience compared to micro-influencers.	Increased online popularity. Globally recognized. Their status is comparable to traditional celebrities.
Advantages	Loyal audiences and have higher levels of	Increased market reach	Capable of reaching a large audience

	<p>trust. Excellent engagement rates. Authenticity; recommendations are similar to word-of-mouth. Lower cost</p>	<p>Better return on investment compared to micro-influencers. Accessibility: easier to contact than micro or mega influencers.</p>	<p>High visibility and recognition create a halo effect, resulting in worldwide trends. Professionalism Easy to measure. Return on Investment.</p>
Disadvantages	<p>Lower reach and visibility. Large-scale activation is challenging. Output is less predictable, variable, and difficult to measure. Return on investment.</p>	<p>Engagement rates range from 5 to 25%, lower than those of micro-influencers. They charge higher than micro influencers.</p>	<p>Charge premium rates. The audience may grow bored with advertising. Less engagement.</p>

Source: Authors' creation, based on previous literature and industry reports ([Haenlein & Libai, 2017](#), [Campbell and Farrell, 2020](#)).

Niche-Focused Influencers:

Niche-focused influencers specialise in specific topics or businesses, targeting a specific audience segment. Brands seeking precision in targeting might explore working with niche influencers. According to research ([Chen et al., 2022](#)), such influencers can increase engagement rates inside their specialty communities, making them a more effective avenue for focused marketing.

Here are key factors that highlight the importance of niche-focused influencers:

- Precision in targeting:

Niche influencers specialise in specific areas, hobbies, or sectors, allowing companies to specifically target their intended audience. Whether it's fitness, beauty, technology, or a unique subculture, these influencers have built a loyal audience that is really interested in the subject. This precision increases the relevancy of the marketing message, resulting in increased engagement and conversion rates ([Belanche and Casaló, 2021](#)).

- Authenticity and Passion:

Niche influencers are typically passionate specialists in their industry. Their authenticity and real love for the niche help to establish a more trustworthy and credible brand association. Followers value the honesty of influencers who actually enjoy and understand the items or

services they promote, which fosters a stronger relationship with them ([Zniva, Weitzl et al., 2023](#)).

- Higher Engagement Rates:

Niche communities have higher engagement rates. Niche-focused influencers, with their specialised material, attract followers who are really interested in the topic. As a result, these influencers typically have better engagement rates than their peers with a larger reach. This increased involvement creates a more receptive audience for brand collaborations ([Conde, Beatriz Casais, 2023](#)).

- Long-Term Partnership:

Niche influencers' shared love for their niche leads to stronger long-term ties with their followers. Brands that form collaborations with niche-focused influencers can profit from long-term involvement. These long-term ties help to sustain brand advocacy and client loyalty inside the niche community ([Thomas, Fowler et al., 2023](#))

- Cost-Effectiveness:

Collaboration with specialised influencers is a cost-effective method for brands with unique products or services. While some influencers may have a limited total reach, their highly targeted audience ensures that the marketing message reaches people who are truly interested in the offering. This focused approach generally leads to a higher return on investment for brands ([Leung, Gu et al., 2022](#)).

- Authority and Expertise:

Niche influencers are considered as experts in their respective domains. Their opinions and endorsements are backed up by their extensive knowledge and experience. Brands profit from perceived authority since it supports the product's quality and relevance in the niche. Influencer knowledge has a beneficial impact on consumer trust and purchasing decisions ([Lee et al., 2020](#)).

In conclusion, niche-focused influencers provide a specialised and authentic approach to influencer marketing. Brands seeking to enter certain markets, establish reputation, and engage with passionate communities should carefully consider cooperating with influencers that share their specialty and values. These influencers' impact continues beyond the current marketing aims, helping to develop a long-term brand presence in niche areas.

Conclusion

Finally, the first chapter gave a detailed look at the ever-changing world of social media. We explored the origins of social media, its evolution, and the various classifications of social

media channels. Understanding the history and background of these platforms has paved the way for a greater understanding of their impact on society and enterprises.

The term Enterprise Social Media (ESM) sheds light on its definitions and aims, emphasizing its function in promoting internal communication, collaboration, and information sharing within enterprises. The importance of social media in both B2B and B2C sectors has been highlighted, with a focus on its transformative capacity to affect consumer behavior and business strategy.

This chapter emphasizes the value of collaborating with celebrities and influencers as a business unit. We looked into how these collaborations can increase brand reach, trust, and engagement. The differences between micro-, macro-, and mega-influencers were explored, providing a more nuanced knowledge of the diversified influencer environment and its potential impact on marketing initiatives.

As we continue exploring the topics of social media, we will delve deeper into the strategic use of these methods for business success. The foundation presented in this first chapter paves the way for a more in-depth examination of the ever-changing world of social media and its many effects on business.

Chapter II

2.1.1 Evolution of Social Media in Business

In the beginning, social media was created for making new friends online and to stay in touch with people from all over the world. Today, in the second decade, we can not imagine a progressive company which focuses on the old ways of promotion: through magazines or TV, because promotion on social media is the best and fastest way to make people see your product or service.

As cellular service extended, cellular phones' capabilities increased, transforming them into "smartphones," and high-speed wireless internet became more widely available in homes, companies, and public areas. The experience that started with a desktop or laptop migrated to mobile phones and tablets. The development of smartphone-compatible social networking apps allowed users to carry their communities with them everywhere they went. Companies benefited from this increased consumer mobility by offering their clients new, easier ways to communicate and purchase products.

The first social media site to provide advertisements was "Facebook," which did so in 2007. ([Grover, Kumar Kar et al., 2022](#))

The way that marketing, consumer involvement, and corporate communication are conducted has changed dramatically as a result of social media's development. Social media has evolved from the early days of experimentation to the sophisticated techniques used by businesses today, and it is now a crucial instrument for the success of organisations. This investigation explores the growth of social media for businesses, looking at significant turning points, difficulties, and tactical changes that have molded the dynamic nexus of internet connectedness and trade. ([Dwivedi, Ismagilova et al., 2021](#))

As it was mentioned before, social media marketing gained traction in the late 2000s when companies realized Facebook and Twitter started to be used for brand promotion and targeted advertising. The advent of advertising tools on these platforms made it possible for companies to target particular groups, which laid the groundwork for contemporary social media marketing tactics.

The decade of the 2010s saw the emergence of visually-focused platforms like Pinterest and Instagram. Companies adjusted by understanding the power of pictures and videos to draw in viewers and implementing visual storytelling into their plans. ([Méndez-Díaz, Akabr, 2022](#))

The period between 2010 and 2020 was the one when social media sites began to incorporate shopping functions as e-commerce grew in popularity. Using Facebook and Instagram,

businesses could immediately display and sell their items. Due to this connection, there has been a noticeable change in how consumers behave, making it harder to distinguish between online and social media searches. [\(Grover, Kumar Kar et al., 2021\)](#)

As well as the integration of e-commerce, an influencer marketing's ascent has changed everything for companies. Influencer partnerships gave marketers access to pre-existing audiences, increasing their exposure and legitimacy. User-generated content developed into a useful resource at the same time, encouraging genuineness and community involvement. [\(Grover, Kumar Kar et al., 2021\)](#)

Since the 2020s, social media analytics advancements have given organizations the ability to make data-driven decisions. Organizations are able to continuously optimize their social media strategy because of the actionable insights obtained by tracking analytics, analyzing user behavior, and measuring campaign impact. [\(Méndez-Díaz, Akabr, 2022\)](#)

Finally, the evolution of social media in business has been a transforming experience. It started as a simple platform for interaction and communication and has developed into a potent instrument for business communication, marketing, and customer involvement. The development of high-speed internet and cell phones has increased its influence and reach even greater.

Businesses have adapted to these developments by using the distinct qualities of various platforms, ranging from Facebook's targeted advertising to Instagram's and Pinterest's visual storytelling potential. The integration of e-commerce and the rise of influencer marketing have blurred the distinction between internet surfing and social media involvement even more.

Furthermore, companies can now optimize their tactics depending on user behaviour and campaign impact by making data-driven decisions thanks to developments in social media analytics. It is evident that social media will remain a crucial instrument in the digital era, influencing business strategies in the years to come.

2.2.1 Social Media Marketing

Definition

SMM (Social Media Marketing) is the use of social platforms as channels to promote a brand, increase the target audience, attract traffic, and increase sales. Social networks are the foundation of SMM [\(Al Tawara and Gide, 2017\)](#).

There are different goals you can achieve using SMM. Each of the goals depends on the exact marketing strategy the company can use: [\(Xu, Wang et al., 2022\)](#)

- increased engagement;

- sales and lead generation;
- customer retention;
- increasing website traffic;
- expanding your target audience;
- collecting testimonials;
- managing negative reviews;
- tracking trends and competitors;
- increasing brand awareness;
- consumer demand research.

Digital over traditional marketing

The number of firms that apply digital marketing to traditional ones is growing every day. This way it is easier for companies to get feedback from clients for service and product optimization and for clients to know about product availability in real life. Another reason why social media marketing is superior to traditional marketing is that it's easier to collect data, such as behaviors and habits of their users. ([Bharti and Kumar, 2020](#))

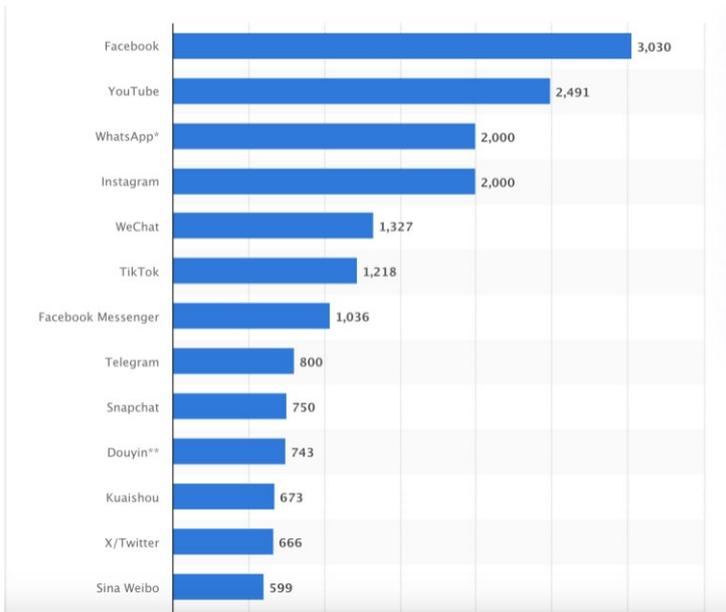
One factor is the resignation of advertising agencies, which serve as middlemen between businesses and groups or individuals. For example, they get enormous fees from TV, radio, and print media advertisers. Companies frequently negotiate directly with websites.

Conventional marketing can be a laborious procedure, and the implementation of its instruments frequently takes a long time. A physical banner requires many permits and creation steps before it can be displayed in a public setting; in contrast, an online banner is displayed far more quickly. When conducting marketing research, traditional questionnaires are used, and it takes a while for the subjects to finish and submit them.

Digital technologies are enabling the constant availability of online marketing. Consequently, the servers that comprise the Internet infrastructure ensure that marketing materials are available online 365 days a year.

According to Statista, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and WeChat are the top 5 most used social media channels in 2023. The entire graph with all the data is shown below. ([Statista, 2023](#))

Figure 4: Most used Social Media Channels 2023



Source: [Statista \(2023\)](#)

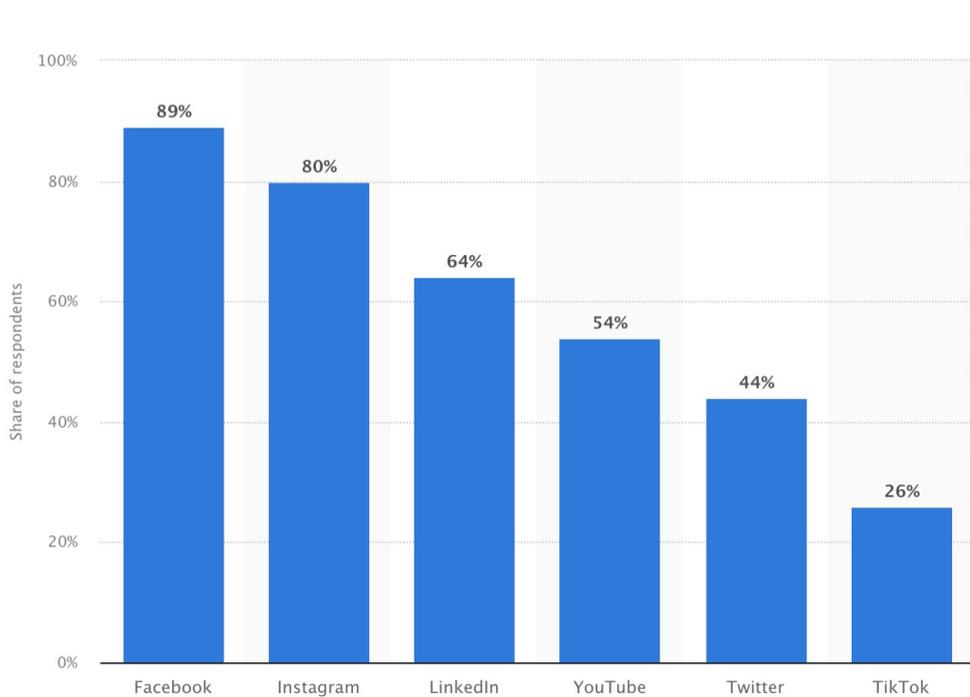
With more than three billion monthly active users, market leader Facebook was the first social network to reach one billion registered accounts. With a combined total of over one billion monthly active members, Meta Platforms owns four of the largest social media networks:

Facebook (main platform), Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Facebook.

Facebook reported having over 3.8 billion monthly users of its primary family product as of the second quarter of 2023. ([Statista, 2023](#))

The top three leading social media platforms used by marketers worldwide as of January 2023 were Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, with 89%, 80%, and 64%, respectively. The whole graph is presented below, along with the information from Statista. Social media marketing has grown to be one of the most popular and effective types of digital marketing in recent years. With just a mouse click, advertisers can connect with billions of potential customers on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Industry professionals especially enjoy the improved exposure for their brands and products, as well as the increased traffic on their websites, among the many advantages of using social media platforms for business. ([Statista 2023](#))

Figure 5: Social Media platforms used by marketers 2023



Source: [Statista \(2023\)](#)

Customer Life cycle in Marketing

Definition: The process of leading prospective clients through the various phases of the customer journey is known as lifecycle marketing. Lifecycle marketing aims to address the demands of the client and customize communications according to their stage of life in order to advance them to the next.

The cycle consists of six main stages:

- 1) *Awareness* - is the first stage of the customer life cycle, and it focuses on targeting new users. Attention-grabbing strategies heavily rely on content marketing and brand presence.
- 2) *Engagement* - leads and audiences are learning about your product. It all comes down to educating potential customers on the features, advantages, and user experience of your product.
- 3) *Evaluation* - that stage signifies the moment when users make a purchase. Influential elements include clear calls-to-action, open pricing, and positive testimonials. It is necessary to employ specialized marketing techniques in which a firm gives users comprehensive knowledge about the company and encourages them to buy by assisting them in determining how the items or services differ from the competitors.
- 4) *Purchase* - at this stage, the customers know that they are ready and are going to buy. It is necessary to lead and make the purchase as simple as possible.
- 5) *Post-purchase* - one of the most important phases of the marketing lifecycle is this one. The business unit needs to continue interacting with customers on a frequent

basis during this phase to demonstrate that they are interested in forming lasting bonds rather than merely pushing things up or down.

- 6) *Brand-advocacy* - converting contented clients into devoted supporters - is the last phase. Customer retention can be facilitated via loyalty programs, special discounts, and first-rate customer service. ([Kavak, Bahtişen et al., 2020](#))

Figure 6: Customer lifecycle funnel



Source: Source: Authors’ creation, based on previous literature and industry reports [Kavak, Bahtişen et al., \(2020\)](#)

Table 2: Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Media Marketing

Advantages	Disadvantages
Cost-related	Trademark and copyright issues
Social interaction	Time-consuming
Interactivity	Trust, Privacy and Security Issues
Targeted market	Negative Feedbacks
Real-Time marketing	Algorithm changes

Source: Source: Authors’ creation, based on previous literature and industry reports [Nadaraja, Rubathee, \(2013\)](#)

Social media marketing can be understood as a subset of online marketing initiatives that round out conventional web-based advertising campaigns and email newsletters.

Promotion of services or goods online using this type of marketing has both advantages, which make the business more successful and increase brand recognition on the market, and disadvantages, which the firm usually tends to face when it does social media marketing.

- *Advantages:*

- 1) Cost-related: social media marketing has low financial barriers compared to traditional methods. Many of the platforms are available for free, even for commercial use, making marketing more affordable. Because users willingly join or follow, the benefit is the minimum effort required to reach a focused audience. Geo-targeted advertising is available on sites like Facebook, guaranteeing a successful audience reach. Social media's viral quality makes it possible for content to be shared swiftly among networks, quickly reaching a broad audience. ([Nadaraja and Yazdanifard, 2013](#))
- 2) Social interaction: social contact has been profoundly affected by social media; users now spend more than 25% of their internet time on social networks, email, and instant messaging. Studies on consumer behaviour highlight the value of internet guidance and information, with people giving third-party reviews more weight. Purchase decisions are directly influenced by this knowledge, even when it comes from online sources. The social interaction features of new media are intimately linked to its purported benefits, which include greater reputation and anticipated reciprocity. ([Nadaraja and Yazdanifard, 2013](#))
- 3) Interactivity: customers can actively participate in social networking on their own terms thanks to user interaction, which gives them authority over communication acts, time, and content. Certain social media platforms encourage users to participate and communicate in both directions with brands, other users, and networked organizations or communities ([Li, Daugherty, et al., 2002](#)). This encourages customers to play an active role in the process.
- 4) Targeted market: Social media gives advertisers the option to target particular audiences by utilizing the interests and preferences of friends and users. Ads for country music performances and singers, for example, are likely to appear when a user expresses interest in the genre on a social networking site. Certain sites even provide a personalized connection by showcasing the country singers that the user's friends enjoy. Advertisers can efficiently reach those who are interested in their offers through this kind of focused and "smart" marketing. Social networking also makes it easier for people to promote items through word-of-mouth, which increases their reach beyond what traditional advertising can accomplish. ([Paquette, 2013](#))
- 5) Real-time marketing: creating and distributing timely and pertinent content to an

audience based on conversations, trends, or current events is known as real-time marketing. Companies can react quickly to events and trends, producing current and relevant content that appeals to their target audience. ([Lieb and Li, 2013](#))

Disadvantages:

- 1) Trademark and copyright issues: when utilizing social media to promote their brands and products, businesses must take all necessary steps to protect their copyrights and trademarks. Brands and other intellectual property owned by a corporation are frequently almost as valuable as the goods or services they provide. Social media can not only help firms promote their brands and distribute content protected by copyright but also make it easier for third parties to abuse a company's trademarks and copyrights. This is because social media can enable informal and spontaneous communication, frequently in real-time. ([Steinman & Hawkins, 2010](#))
- 2) Time-consuming: The interactive aspect of social media means that maintaining accounts, producing content, and interacting with users all require constant work and resources. Effective two-way interactions need dedication and a change in marketing strategy to concentrate on building enduring connections that may result in higher sales. Important responsibilities include keeping an eye on every network, replying to remarks, answering inquiries, and disseminating useful product information. Companies that don't offer a specialized social media management solution can find it difficult to compete. ([Barefoot & Szabo, 2010](#)).
- 3) Trust, Privacy, and Security Issues: questions about data security, privacy, and trust are raised when brands are promoted on social media. Businesses need to be aware of these problems and take action to reduce their responsibility when managing personal data. Customer loyalty is greatly impacted by trust, especially when it comes to transaction security and privacy. Large-scale internet purchasing has been severely hampered by the fear of credit card theft. Some social media marketing initiatives have seen a considerable deterioration in their business image due to privacy issues. Data use on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter is governed by privacy policies. Marketers should keep their detailed standards for data practices and make sure their campaigns comply with these guidelines. In the online purchasing process, trust - which is intimately related to security - is essential for making up for the lack of sensory sensations. ([Steinman & Hawkins, 2010](#))

- 4) Negative feedback: social media changes users into advertisers and marketers, which affects how people view a firm and its goods and services. The effect depends on the online presence of the business and the calibre of its products. With the rise of Web 2.0 technologies, consumer-generated content—such as reviews and photos—has grown to be an essential information resource for online buyers and has a substantial impact on electronic commerce.

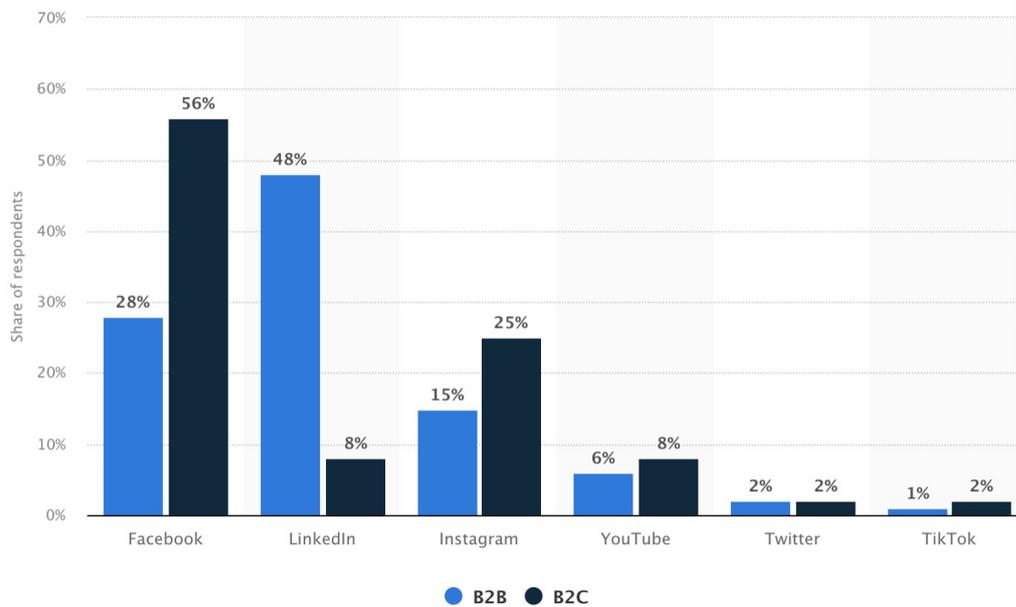
Marketing initiatives face difficulties when negative reactions appear on social media, especially when offensive or negative content is posted. It can be difficult for marketers to stop these kinds of things from happening, particularly when unhappy clients or competing companies share negative content. On the other hand, it is essential to respond quickly to negative feedback. Effective management of social networks necessitates quick action to remove offensive content, even though it takes more time. ([Cheung, Lee, & Thadani 2009](#)).

- 5) Algorithm changes: the natural reach of material is impacted by the regular algorithm updates made by social media networks. Businesses must constantly modify their strategy in this dynamic market, taking into account things like engagement analytics and changing content methods. Algorithm modifications could force companies to reassess their content initiatives and find a balance between sponsored and organic methods. Keeping up with these developments is essential to social media marketing effectiveness and visibility maintenance. ([Gupta, 2023](#))

2.3.1 Social Media in B2B

An organization classified as B2B (business-to-business) sells its goods and services mostly to other businesses as opposed to private customers. B2B enterprises generally serve other organizations' requirements by offering services, tools, or solutions that enhance their operations, streamline their workflows, or address certain issues. ([Jewels and Timbrell, 2001](#)) Alibaba, Microsoft, Salesforce, and Adobe Systems are a few examples of B2B firms.

Figure 7: Most important social media platforms for B2B and B2C marketers worldwide as of January 2023



Source: [Statista, \(2023\)](#)

As can be seen in the graph above, 48% of companies use LinkedIn to promote their businesses to other businesses. LinkedIn is a powerful social media platform that helps companies and professionals connect, build professional relationships, engage together, and achieve their networking and marketing goals. According to [LinkedIn](#), the applications have some tools that help companies to do that:

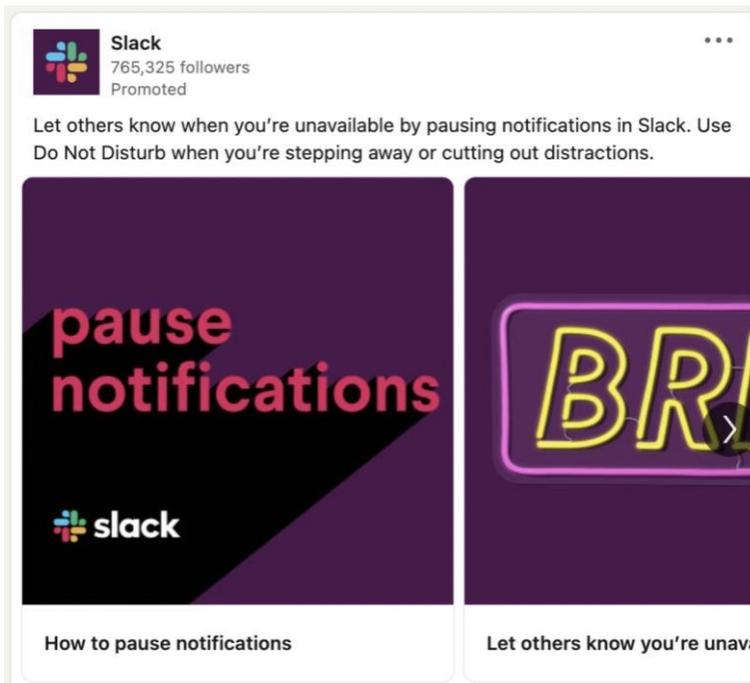
- **Build professional profiles:**
Create a detailed and professional company profile that highlights crucial facts about your firm, such as your mission, goods, and services.
- **LinkedIn Sales Navigator:** It is a premium solution built for B2B sales professionals. To find and get in touch with potential customers, it offers improved insights, lead recommendations, and sophisticated search and filtering capabilities. Sales Navigator assists in streamlining the sales process and improving targeting.
- **LinkedIn Ads:** Sponsored Content, Sponsored InMail, and Display Ads are just a few of the ad forms available on LinkedIn's extensive advertising platform. Advertisements can be targeted by B2B businesses according to particular parameters like industry, job title, firm size, and more. This enables precision targeting to reach the intended audience.
- **Employee Advocacy:** Encourage employees to be brand ambassadors by posting corporate updates and material on their own LinkedIn profiles. The company's communications gain greater credibility and legitimacy when employee advocacy is involved.

- LinkedIn Events: B2B businesses may utilize LinkedIn Events to develop and promote virtual or in-person events directly on the platform. In a business setting, this functionality is useful for organizing conferences, webinars, product launches, and networking events.
- LinkedIn Groups: Joining or creating LinkedIn Groups allows B2B organizations to interact with professionals, share industry insights, and participate in discussions. It may be a powerful tool for forming communities centered on specific themes or businesses.
- LinkedIn Analytics (Company Pages): LinkedIn Analytics allows B2B companies to track the performance of their content on their Company Pages. This covers measures like impressions, follower demographics, and engagement. Companies may improve their content strategy and gain a deeper understanding of their audience by analyzing these indicators.
- LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms: Lead Gen Forms simplify the lead generation process by allowing B2B organizations to capture valuable information from prospects directly through LinkedIn adverts. This feature assists in the efficient capture of leads and connects smoothly with customer relationship management (CRM) systems.
- Showcase Pages on LinkedIn: Showcase Pages enable B2B businesses to establish dedicated pages for specific goods, services, or campaigns. This makes it easier to customize information for various target audiences and interests, enabling businesses to emphasize particular facets of their operations. ([LinkedIn](#))

By utilizing these capabilities, organizations may effectively leverage LinkedIn as a powerful tool for brand building, lead creation, employee engagement, and professional networking in the B2B space.

Slack is a productivity platform for client businesses that boosts performance by empowering everyone with no-code automation, making search and knowledge sharing effortless, and keeping teams connected and engaged as they move work along together. ([Slack](#)) Their marketing presence on LinkedIn mostly focuses on new customers by implementing ads with lifehacks on how to use the program.

Figure 8: Advertisement of Slack on LinkedIn



Source: [LinkedIn](#)

Slack's LinkedIn presence, particularly their 'Life at Slack' page ([Life at Slack on LinkedIn](#)), serves a dual purpose. It not only serves as a landing page for visitors, but it also boosts potential employees' trust in Slack as a prospective employer. For the broader public, it provides a glimpse into the company's team, core beliefs, and major projects.

In addition, they have placed calls-to-action (CTAs) on their website in key places to encourage users to participate right away, increasing website traffic.

A full perspective of the organization is offered on their LinkedIn page through a combination of company photos, unique insights from workers, testimonials, job openings, and hosted events.

The success of Slack's LinkedIn marketing strategy can be attributed to several factors:

- They have effectively linked their website to drive increased traffic.
- Their 'About Us' section provides a clear explanation of their operations, mission, vision, and value proposition.
- They repurpose their blogs and other social media content for sharing on LinkedIn.

For a B2B brand, maintaining an active presence on LinkedIn is essential. Slack's LinkedIn strategy has proven successful, amassing an impressive 1.2 million followers.

Another example is HubSpot, an established company in marketing and sales that has successfully used content marketing to position itself as a leading brand. HubSpot has become a prominent and influential SaaS (software-as-a-service) brand, with a LinkedIn following of 713k and an astounding revenue of \$1.3 billion in 2021. ([HubSpot](#))

Company's success can be attributed to its content-centric culture, which is mirrored in its LinkedIn strategy. The concepts that have led to the success of its blog are being applied to its LinkedIn presence. ([HubSpot on LinkedIn](#))

HubSpot keeps a regular publication schedule, releasing multiple times per week. This frequency exceeds that of other SaaS (software as a service) LinkedIn profiles, with HubSpot creating a year's worth of content for other brands in a matter of weeks.

This consistency serves in two ways:

- It indicates to LinkedIn's algorithm that the HubSpot page is quite active.
- It motivates users to return and interact with the content.

However, the sheer volume of content is insufficient. The material must also be valuable to the audience, which is referred to as audience-content fit.

HubSpot also succeeds in this area. Its key consumers are SaaS (software-as-a-service) marketers, who are notorious for being wary of firms that do not provide instructive or valuable content prior to purchase. As a result, regardless of format, the majority of HubSpot's LinkedIn content is instructive.

HubSpot is skilled at establishing communities by starting debates in which their target audience is eager to engage.

The HubSpot team repurposes its content on LinkedIn, posting podcast parts as short videos and transforming portions of articles into LinkedIn posts.

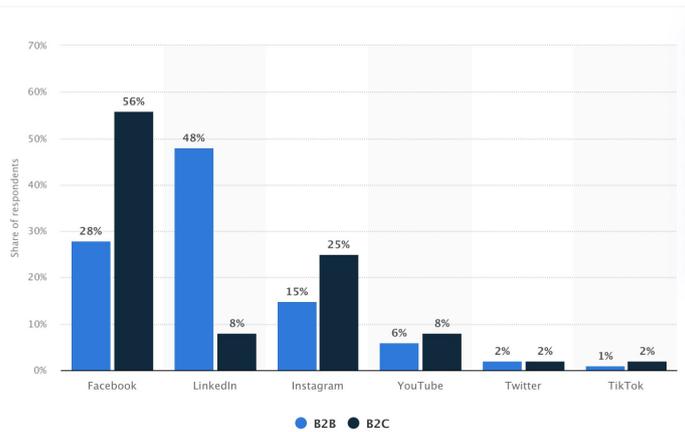
HubSpot uses LinkedIn for attracting new talent in addition to brand building and lead generation. However, unlike other brands, HubSpot does not promote itself. Instead, they use employee-generated content (EGC), encouraging employees to share their good brand experiences.

2.4.1 Social Media in B2C

A business that specializes in selling goods or services directly to individual customers for their own use is known as a B2C (business-to-consumer) enterprise. B2C enterprises prioritize fulfilling the requirements, inclinations, and aspirations of end users; their marketing efforts are generally directed at building a robust brand identity and fostering a sentimental bond with their clients. ([Jewels and Timbrell, 2001](#)) Some examples of B2C firms are Uber, McDonald's, and Sephora.

The most used social media channels for B2C in each country are different: they mostly depend on which applications or websites are used the most among the clients.

Figure 9: Most important social media platforms for B2B and B2C marketers worldwide as of January 2023



Source: [Statista, \(2023\)](#)

According to Source: [Statista](#), more than 50% of marketers worldwide consider Facebook to be the main social media platform for B2C.

[Facebook](#) is still a major player in business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing, thanks to its large user base and variety of advertising choices. Companies use Facebook groups, Pages, and targeted advertisements to increase brand awareness.

Starbucks, for example, uses its Facebook page to promote events, introduce new products, and encourage community involvement.

Besides that, Starbucks creates different campaigns:

One of the best marketing moves by Starbucks is that they always bring kindness through storytelling in social profile while at the same time promoting their drinks. That makes the customer not only read the story but also be a part of it by purchasing from Starbucks.

Figure 10: Advertisment of Starbucks on FaceBook



Source: [Starbucks on Facebook](#)

Special seasonal drinks or items that have been created by the company create an annual excitement: many Starbucks fans wait for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and other significant holidays because of special promo coffee drinks and, of course, to advertise limited edition products on their Facebook profiles and other social networks.

Also, Starbucks launched its largest global advertising campaign on Facebook to raise awareness of the project, which celebrated its partnership with Sabyasachi and support for girls' education. This particular campaign invited people to buy mugs and cups from stores.

Figure 11: Advertsment of Starbucks India on FaceBook



Source: [Starbucks on Facebook](#)

Another key to successful marketing is communication and engagement. That's why Starbucks is actively implementing different strategies:

- 1) In 2008, Starbucks ran the world's largest Facebook advertising campaign, involving 16 Facebook members, and upon login, users would be shown an ad for a Starbucks charity event, singing along to The Beatles' "All You Need Is Love."
- 2) #Sketchtheblend is one of the hashtags created by Starbucks. It happened during the Indian celebration of Diwali, where clients were invited to express their creative talents with the Diwali Blend Cup. The top five could get five complimentary drinks. The firm celebrated Karnataka's rich coffee legacy and skill by launching the #StarbucksDiwaliBlend whole-bean coffee marketing.

Figure 12: Advertisment of Starbucks India on FaceBook



Source: [Starbucks on Facebook](#)

In its marketing strategy, Starbucks focuses on the 4P's rule: ([Goi, 2009](#))

Product: Expensive prices are justified by high-quality items. They make sure the coffee tastes better than what its rivals are selling.

Price: Compared to other brands, Starbucks charges at least 25% more for their coffee. It charges a premium for its great food and drinks, but its patrons are ready to pay the price.

Promotion: The corporation employs a variety of mediums to market its products, including TV, social media, and advertisements. Their distinctive marketing media mix sets them apart. Starbucks spends the least on marketing compared to other well-known international businesses like Apple, but it still has a significant influence. Why? The success of Starbucks can be attributed to its effective marketing approach.

Place: To attract customers, Starbucks creates a luxurious, peaceful environment in each of its locations.

Instagram

According to the data from Instagram, 90% of the 1 billion users follow at least one business profile. B2C companies take advantage of Instagram's wider audience, networking tools, and advertising products to attract new customers. ([Embedsocial, 2024](#))

From its launch to now, Instagram has taken a huge step in the evolution of social media.

Whereas before, the app was used more for posting square and real-time photos, Instagram now has a huge set of tools for running a personal page, blog, or brand profile. Hashtags, funnels through reels, storytelling in stories, automated feeds, collaborations with other brands, and targeting are some of the ways to make your product recognisable online.

For example, [12Storeez](#) is a Russian fashion brand that gained popularity due to its effective marketing strategy on Instagram. As the creators of the brand say, the launch of the line came in 2014 - it was during this period that a chronological feed appeared on Instagram - the more interesting posts to followers - the more likes and comments, and, accordingly, the reach.

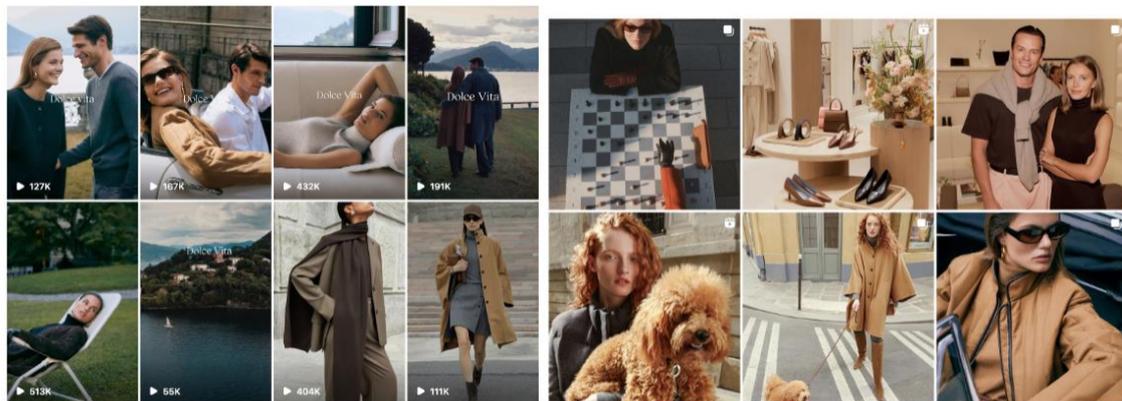
Therefore, the page was promoted not with resources in the form of money but with resources in the form of interesting and informative posts for subscribers. Instagram helped the brand spread not only in Russia but also worldwide. ([Incrussa, 2019](#))

Here are some key aspects of their approach:

Visual Content: 12storeez's Instagram feed is highly visual, featuring stunning images of their clothing and accessories. The brand focuses on creating aspirational and lifestyle-oriented content that resonates with its target audience. Their mission is to sell not clothes but emotions and lifestyles. Their profile looks like a fashion magazine, which makes you fascinated by it. Following trends in Instagram, the brand started to promote itself through reels, but in an unusual way: not like all other brands, taking the audience by viral content and

current trends, but by creating mini-stories in the feed that seem like short films. Each series of reels is dedicated to the brand's upcoming collection. [\(Incrussa, 2019\)](#)

Figure 13: Instagram greed of 12 Storeez



Source: [12 Storeez' Instagram profile](#)

Influencer Collaborations: 12storeez has collaborated with numerous influencers and celebrities to promote their products. These collaborations help the brand reach a wider audience and generate buzz around its collections. The first collaborations were with the owners of the brand, which have their own blogs on Instagram, but with time, they started to collaborate with other influencers on Instagram by asking them to tag the brand they are wearing on the pictures. [\(Incrussa, 2019\)](#)

User-Generated Content: 12storeez encourages its customers to share their photos wearing the brand's clothing. They often repost user-generated content on their official Instagram account, which helps build a sense of community and engagement. [\(Incrussa, 2019\)](#)

Storytelling: 12storeez uses Instagram Stories to share behind-the-scenes glimpses of their brand, including production processes, fashion shows, and team activities. This storytelling approach helps humanise the brand and connect with its followers on a deeper level. [\(Incrussa, 2019\)](#)

Engagement and Interaction: 12storeez actively engages with its followers by responding to comments and messages, running contests and giveaways, and conducting polls and Q&A sessions. This two-way communication fosters a strong sense of community among the audience. For the followers, it's important to feel someone behind the page, and this kind of interaction increases the level of loyalty to the brand. [\(Incrussa, 2019\)](#)

E-commerce Integration: 12storeez seamlessly integrates its Instagram presence with its e-commerce platform. Product tags and shoppable links allow users to easily purchase items featured in their Instagram posts and Stories. [\(Incrussa, 2019\)](#)

By combining these strategies, 12storeez has built a strong and engaged community on Instagram, driving brand awareness, customer engagement, and sales.

YouTube is another platform to use that helps promote your business in the B2C sector - a platform that gets over 2.7 billion monthly users through engaging video content. As a practice for business units, creating and sharing content with your potential or existing customers on YouTube increases loyalty and interest in your product. For most YouTube users, videos should teach you, entertain you, and make you want to share the content with others. ([Beloglazova, Khodzhaliev et al., 2020](#))

There are several points that a company should make while creating and fulfilling a YouTube profile with content:

1. Clarify and get to know your platform's audience:
 - Who are they?
 - What do they want?
 - What videos do they need?
2. Create compelling content and have a strategy. Since YouTube is a platform for watching videos, make sure that the pictures on your business channel are of high quality. Also, it's better to create content in episodes so that people subscribe to the page in anticipation of new videos.
3. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of optimizing a website or web page to improve its visibility and ranking in search engine results pages. It helps to increase the chances of appearing in search results when users search for relevant keywords or topics:
 - Keyword research
 - Optimization of titles and descriptions
 - The usage of hashtags. ([Panchal, Shah et al., 2021](#))
4. Collaboration and Influencer Marketing: Partner with influencers or other relevant channels to expand your reach and tap into their established audience base. Collaborations can generate buzz and bring new viewers to your channel. ([Biaudet, 2017](#))
5. Call-to-Action (CTA): Include clear and compelling CTAs in your videos to guide viewers towards the desired action, whether it's visiting your website, subscribing to your channel, or making a purchase. It can be either a special button on the video, which forwards the viewer to a landing page, or a link in the description with a call to action. ([Esteves, Fraser, 2022](#))

There are some examples of successful pages on YouTube by famous brands:

- For example, [GoPro](#), a company renowned for its production of action cameras. The YouTube channel of GoPro is a testament to the power of user-generated content, as it highlights the incredible journeys and experiences documented through their cameras. This approach has been instrumental in fostering a robust community of devoted customers for GoPro. These customers not only share a mutual enthusiasm for adventure but also motivate others to embark on their explorations.

Furthermore, this strategy has not only amplified GoPro's brand visibility but also positioned it as a lifestyle rather than just a product. The shared content serves as authentic testimonials to the camera's capabilities, thereby enhancing consumer trust and driving product sales. Thus, GoPro's marketing strategy exemplifies the potential of user-generated content in building a loyal customer base and promoting brand engagement. ([Leonhardt, 2015](#))

Through the successful implementation of these B2C techniques, businesses can take advantage of YouTube's large user base to increase brand exposure, lead generation, and conversions - all of which will help them achieve their marketing goals.

- Another example is Nike, the distinguished leader in the realm of athletic apparel, which has strategically harnessed the power of YouTube as a dynamic conduit to foster connections with its international clientele and enhance brand engagement. ([Nike on Youtube](#))

The company's marketing paradigm on YouTube is anchored by several core principles:

- Branded content with inspiring videos which consist of thrilling storytelling and magnificent visuals
- Athlete collaborations in the way of interviews. There is a huge list of athletes who have contracts with Nike. Arranging an interview on the official Nike channel helps both the celebrity and the brand increase the viewer's loyalty.
- Recent product launches help to promote new product releases. The most popular ways to do it are through teasers, video demonstrations of a new item, or behind-the-scenes footage.
- Tutorials and Training: As was said before, one of the impacts of watching YouTube is learning something new. That's why Nike implemented a wealth of tutorials and training videos, which help to improve technique and achieve different goals in the sports world.

Nike's YouTube marketing strategy is focused on creating engaging videos, collaborating with celebrities, offering value to its customers, and fostering a sense of community. Nike

successfully reaches its target audience, improves brand recognition, and cultivates a devoted client base by utilising YouTube's capabilities.

2.4.2 Current Trends in Social Media Marketing

In the ever-growing and evolving online world, social media marketing has a particular influence. Every year, new technologies and strategies emerge and are adapted by companies and marketers that aim to increase brand awareness in the online world as well as keep in touch with customers. From now on, social media is not just a platform to communicate with friends and not a place to share holiday photos - it is a driving force and a strong tool for brands to sell their products worldwide with the right strategies, audience targeting, and cool visuals with a call to action. Below are the current trends in social media marketing that are already being utilised by global companies and will be trending in the coming year. ([Dey and Tanty, 2021](#))

1. Podcasts.

The growing popularity of podcasting and audio streaming has changed digital marketing, allowing influencers, content creators, and businesses to connect with audiences in different ways. Podcasts, which are defined as serial audio material, play a significant part in brand recognition and positioning. Podcasts must be included in the marketing strategy for three reasons: ([Harharah, A., Abudawood, 2024](#))

Reach of the Audience:

According to forecasts, podcast listenership will increase significantly, making it an essential element in advertising strategies to fulfil growing demand.

Targeted Engagement:

Podcasts allow marketers to communicate with audiences at any time and from any location, aligning with the on-the-go lifestyle of today's customers. On-demand streaming allows you to reach a larger audience and generate leads.

Humanization and Brand reputation:

Podcasts enable brands to transcend traditional roles, establishing authority and thought leadership by personally sharing expertise. This humanizes the brand, fostering customer trust and confidence.

For example, TGIM by Shopify was created for entrepreneurs to share with their audience the successful stories of running businesses and launching start-ups or the #LIPSTORIES podcast by Sephora, where each episode feature is about women's inspiration around the world, proves that podcasting is an effective way for a company to increase awareness of the brand, reach a specific audience, establish thought leadership, and foster personal connections with their

customers. Businesses can engage their audience, share useful content, and promote business success by leveraging the power of audio storytelling. ([LinkedIn, 2023](#))

2. The power of artificial intelligence.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly revolutionizing the marketing environment, providing firms with new and creative methods to contact and engage with their target audience. AI is transforming marketing, from personalised customer experiences to data-driven insights.

Among the AI Marketing use cases are: ([Sadiku, Ashaolu, 2021](#))

Data analysis is the process of collecting and filtering through vast amounts of marketing data from numerous campaigns and initiatives that would otherwise have to be manually sorted.

Natural Language Processing (NLP) is the process of creating human-like language for use in content production, customer service bots, experience customisation, and other applications.

Predicting the most successful ad and media placements for a company to reach their target audience and maximize marketing plan ROI is referred to as media buying.

Automated Decision-Making: AI marketing solutions assist businesses in determining which marketing or business growth plan to employ based on historical data or outside data inputs.

Material generation refers to creating short and long pieces of material for a marketing strategy, such as video subtitles, email subject lines, online copy, blogs, and more.

Real-time Personalization: Changing a customer's experience with a marketing asset, such as a web page, social post, or email, to reflect the customer's previous preferences to urge a certain action, such as clicking a link, signing up for something, or purchasing a product.

([Alawneh, Al-Momani et al., 2023](#))

3. Influencers and the use of product placement.

That's a common marketing tool to use, which allows influencers to promote the product strategically. As most social media users are tired of annoying and excessive advertising - product placement entails incorporating a brand's product or service into the content made by influencers, such as posts, videos, or other types of media. This strategy makes use of the influencer's current audience and credibility to promote a business or product in a more genuine and relatable way. ([Alassani and Göretz, 2019](#))

There are several points about this trend:

Authentic brand recommendations: Influencers collaborate with brands to provide authentic and relatable product recommendations.

Increased Visibility: Product placement broadens brand reach by leveraging the influencer's following.

Storytelling is used by influencers to generate captivating material that includes the marketed product.

Product placement is adaptive across numerous social media platforms, catering to varying consumer preferences.

Measurable Impact: Brands can evaluate campaign success using measures offered by influencers, such as engagement and conversion rates.

Product placement in influencer content is a proven approach for marketers looking for real and engaging promotions. Brands may use influencers to engage with their target audience and accomplish quantifiable marketing goals by selecting influencers carefully, confirming that they're an appropriate fit, and following ethical standards. ([Williams, Petrosky et al., 2011](#))

4. SEO on social media.

For a large number of people, it's hard to imagine living without social media applications. And if for some of them, they are just tools to be in touch with their friends and family, share videos or pictures, and stay updated with world situations, the young generation uses search engine optimization on social media. ([Plötz, S., Martinez, 2023](#))

As an example, TikTok is a great application for discovering search engine optimization. Understanding TikTok's unique dynamics is critical for successful search engine optimization (SEO). TikTok's SEO focuses on video content, emphasizing hashtags, engagement, and optimised videos, and it has over 80 million daily users, mostly from Generation Z. TikTok's SEO strategy goes beyond the platform and influences search visibility on Google. Higher TikTok interaction improves visibility on Google, especially now that the search engine adds video material to its results. TikTok adds suggested keywords, increasing the probability of video content appearing in search results compared to traditional websites. Mastering TikTok SEO improves overall marketing efforts by reaching a larger audience. TikTok SEO has become an important tool for brand projects, given the popularity of video content among Generation Z. ([Reiter, M., Cupka](#))

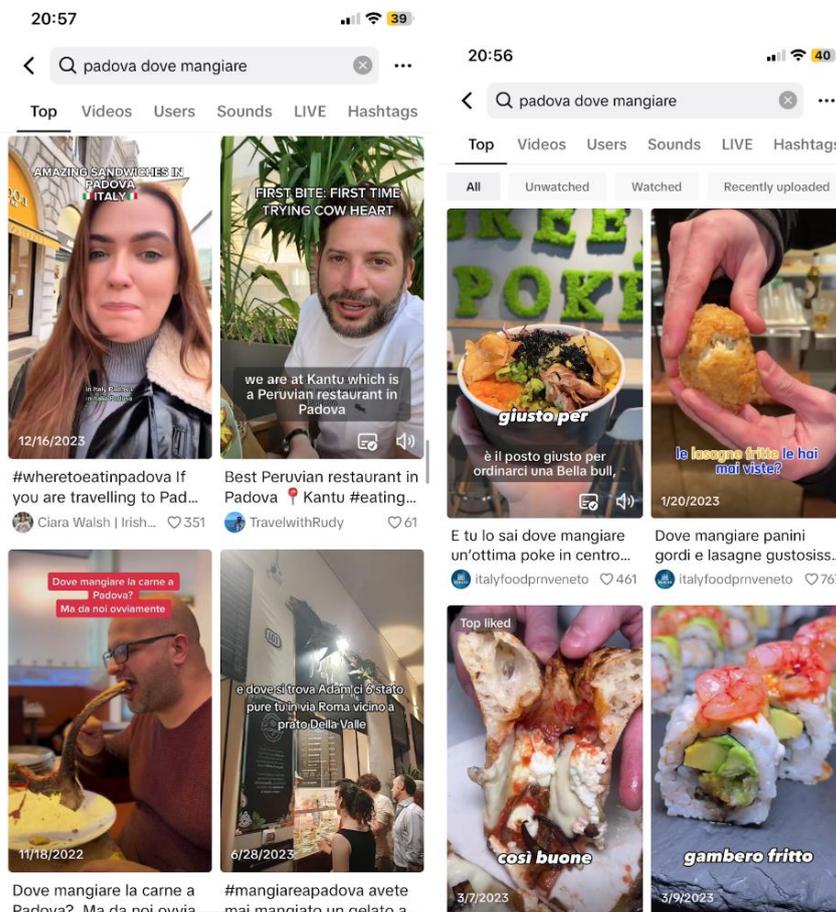
To improve TikTok SEO, businesses should:

1. Identify their target audience and tailor content to their interests.
2. Use specialty hashtags to boost searchability.
3. Use trending audio to improve visibility.
4. Post consistently for better engagement and search results.

For example, when typing "dove mangiare padova" into the search box, we see a huge number of different videos with recommendations on where to eat in Padua. You can optimise your search by adding more specific words, such as "economici" to see budget options "tipico" to see traditional cuisine options. You can also adjust the results by choosing "recently uploaded", "watched" and "unwatched".

Social media SEO makes it easier for the user to search for something, as it turns that search into browsing content in one place rather than offering the option of browsing recommendations (restaurants in this case) on different sites. SEO also offers an easy and cost-effective way to promote your services and goods for business by building the right strategy.

Figure 14: Search on Tiktok



Source: Tiktok

Looking ahead to 2024, social SEO tactics will continue to be game changers, distinguishing firms that invest in thorough copywriting. Integrating "keyword research" into a social media plan is consistent with an emerging landscape in which the right keywords drive content visibility and interaction.

5. Reels on Instagram are a faster way to gain popularity

Reels are a popular feature on Instagram, which was launched in 2020. It allows people to create short videos, which can be used for different purposes, including marketing.

Nowadays, there are more than 25 billion business accounts on Instagram, and half of these brand profiles use social media to promote their businesses. With the algorithmic publishing reels, the promotion of brands on Instagram started to be easier and cheaper. There are several benefits to using reels on Instagram for business purposes: [\(Liang and Wolfe, 2022\)](#)

- To introduce the brand and yourself;
- To boost reach and engagement;
- To create a funnel which leads to sell product/service;
- To show Behind-the-scenes of a brand;
- To show your products/services in an entertaining way;
- To promote your brand;
- To do collaborations with partners;
- To arrange contest on Social media;

For example, Reels is one of the strongest tools for Russian businesses to be promoted and get more clients on Instagram. Since 2022, the usual way of advertising a profile through Instagram is no longer possible. That's why the Russian business world is focusing on creating generated and viral content on Instagram. Reels' algorithms are changeable, which is why companies and marketers are constantly having to come up with new ways to get into the Instagram funnel to promote and reach their target audience to find new customers.

There are several points in how the algorithm understands that your content might be interesting and promotes your reel not only to your followers: ([Socialinsider, 2024](#))

- The first three seconds matter.

Be sure that the first three seconds of your reel are engaging - it can be a clinging headline that expresses the viewer's pain and triggers them, or a vivid picture that will make the user continue watching the video.

- Organised profile.

Your business profile should be well framed: The user name should be specific and understandable, and the profile picture should be either a logo or a clear photo. A profile description should contain information such as industry, keywords that can be used to find the brand, a catchy word or phrase that will attract the attention of the social network user, as well as a call to go to the company's website or a direct message to contact the brand.

- A funnel is a path to one more subscriber.

A funnel is a chain of touchpoints that, over a certain amount of time, lead from a user who happened to see your video in recommendations to your subscriber, and then by watching a competently constructed series of videos to a potential customer.

- Experiment.

Instagram algorithms prefer an unconventional approach, so a brand will not succeed in promotion if it posts identical content. It is necessary to create videos on different topics (for example, if there is a profile of a clothing brand, marketers can make videos about the current colours for the year, what outfits to take on holiday, capsule wardrobes for work; create

interactive videos in the form of interviews with brand employees and customers, or come up with topical humorous content). It is necessary to pay attention to the length of the video: Instagram shows videos to different audiences depending on the length of the video. If the format of short videos does not get into the recommendations, adapt the format to a different type of audience, which may be more loyal and become potential customers in the future.

- Video Series.

Storytelling in reels is another trending idea on how to run your business page on Instagram. Instead of a long video format, try splitting the video into several parts, and at the end of each video, leave intrigue and a note that the continuation of the story will be in another video. This technique makes interested users go from the recommended reels directly to your page and linger there. After watching the video, the user will probably want to watch your other publications and then possibly subscribe, go to your website, or place an order. When making a series of videos, you need to make sure that your profile is well packaged. Otherwise, the user will have nothing to latch on to, and you will lose a potential customer.

- Trending music.

Even among music, some trends are most popular among reelsmakers. You can track a trending sound by clicking on the "arrow" icon next to the song title and then clicking on the sound to see the number of videos already created for that track. Here, it is important to correctly assess your strength. - sounds with more than 20,000 thousand videos are already on the list of popular, and with such songs, the probability of getting into the recommendations will be lower. In addition to choosing a song, it is also important to choose a melody that will fit the video itself. That is, if the video itself is dynamic and colourful, then you should choose a track that is also energetic. ([Socialinsider, 2024](#))

How reels work on business objectives:

- Assist in labelling a problem;
- Present a product or service as a solution to a problem;
- Bring up timeless topics, which helps attract the attention of casual users and boost reach;
- Assist in appealing to the audience and driving brand communication;
- Promote relevant topics in a niche, create associations with the product, and improve the reputation of the company or expert. ([Sisova, 2023](#))

The social network's algorithm itself works like this:

- Instagram aims to show the user content that will be of interest to them. The algorithm evaluates the quality and engagement of your content based on subscribers' interactions with the brand profile (likes, comments, views, and savings)

- The algorithm takes into account the user's interests as well as interactions with the brand account. More interactions increase the chances that users will see the following posts as well.
- Instagram encourages regular content updates. Regular page maintenance helps retain existing followers and attract new ones. ([Sisova, 2023](#))

To summarize, the dynamic arena of social media trends is ever-changing, providing marketers with both difficulties and chances to succeed. The emergence of podcasts as a strong storytelling tool has changed content consumption, providing companies with a unique chance to connect with viewers on a more personal level. At the same time, the incorporation of artificial intelligence has completely transformed the online world, creating new potential to improve and simplify the experience both internally and externally - when engaging with customers.

Collaboration with micro- and macroinfluencers continues to be a driving force in influencer marketing. The smart use of product placement in these influencers' tales helps companies reach a larger audience while also smoothly integrating into consumers' daily lives.

The increased relevance of SEO on social media platforms has affected how information is discovered and consumed. Understanding the importance of keywords and optimizing content accordingly has become essential elements of any effective social media strategy.

Reels on Instagram stand out in a quick and interesting manner that provides a shortcut to popularity. This trend emphasizes that viewers prefer short form, visually appealing content, giving marketers a challenge to capture attention in a brief but effective manner.

To manage the ever-changing social media landscape, marketers and organizations must stay current on these trends. The ability to adapt and use new techniques ensures not only relevance but also the ability to interact with a broad and changing audience. Looking ahead, the volatile nature of social media trends necessitates constant research, encouraging marketers to be creative and flexible in their plans to stay ahead of this ever-changing digital frontier.

2.5.1 The Differences between Marketing in B2B and B2C

Marketing strategies can vary greatly depending on whether they are aimed at individual consumers (B2C) or other businesses (B2B). While both B2B and B2C marketing share common ground in aiming to create value and promote products or services, they differ in several key areas. These differences stem from the distinct characteristics of their target audiences and the nature of the decision-making process in each case.

The strategies for B2B and B2C marketers are different. Before going into more detail about the main strategies, let's take a look at their main differences. ([Rėklaitis and Pilelienė, 2019](#))

Table 3: The B2C and B2B marketing strategies

B2C marketing	B2B marketing
Sells to the end customer directly.	Company or business-oriented.
Customers are impulsive and want to know all the information about a product at once. They rarely research to learn more about a product.	Customers prefer to do additional research before buying and compare the product with competing options.
Aimed at creating an emotional connection with the product.	Focuses on product features and values.
Works around benefits and desires.	Builds on logic and features.
The goal of potential customers is self-improvement.	Customers' goal is to provide a business need. Sells products for personal use.
Distributes small quantities of products to large numbers of consumers.	Large-scale sales. There are few customers, but the volume of purchases is large.
Consumers make purchases immediately after seeing an advertisement for a product, or within a very short time. They are looking for instant results.	Customers usually go through a longer buying process.

Source: Author's creation based on [Rėklaitis and Pilelienė, \(2019\)](#)

According to the table above, business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) strategies are unique ways to stay on the market. B2B transactions entail selling products to end customers indirectly through businesses, necessitating a company-oriented approach. These transactions are different because of a challenging and time-consuming decision-making process in which clients, motivated by logical reasons, carefully research and compare options to satisfy specific business requirements. The goal of the B2B strategy is to establish professional and functional connections while highlighting practical benefits and contributing to the improvement of company activities. ([Rėklaitis and Pilelienė, 2019](#)) However, by taking a consumer-oriented approach, business-to-consumer (B2C) strategies concentrate on selling goods directly to specific customers. Customers are more impulsive

while making purchases, and in most cases, their motivation to buy something is based on their current desires and emotions. B2C marketing aims to trigger emotional responses from customers by emphasizing satisfaction with themselves, lifestyle enhancement, and instant pleasure. In comparison to B2B, the B2C market has shorter buying cycles, lower purchase volumes per customer, and a larger customer base. ([Rėklaitis and Pilelienė, 2019](#))

Finally, the contrast between B2B and B2C strategies goes beyond the nature of the final customer to include the entire sales process, such as the decision-making schedule, emotive versus logical appeals, and transaction size. Recognizing and effectively dealing with all of these differences is vital for companies pursuing success in either area. ([Rėklaitis and Pilelienė, 2019](#))

In addition to these characteristics of B2B and B2C marketing comparisons, there is also another comparison table that has been adapted by [Saha et al. \(2014\)](#) and is based on several characteristics:

Table 4: The B2C and B2B marketing strategies

Criteria	B2B	B2C
Target	Enterprise	End-user
Market size	Smaller	Large
Sales volume	High	Low
Decision making	By committee	Individually
Risk	High	Low
Purchasing process	Longer	Short
Payment	Instant payment may not be required	Often instant
Transaction	Requires more complex system	Cash/card/qr code
Consumer decision	Rational	Emotional
Demand	Based on need	Based on wish
Usage of mass media	Avoidable	Essential

Source: Author's creation based on [Saha et al. \(2014\)](#)

Most of the characteristics are similar to those in the previous Table 3, but there are also other additional factors involved in comparing marketing strategies:

Size: B2B transactions are usually the types of transactions that sell services or items to other businesses. In most cases, the number of businesses in one field is smaller than the number of potential clients in B2C.

Risk: Overall, the risk in B2B strategies is higher due to longer sales cycles, market sensitivity, and supply chain vulnerability. Each of these factors leads to increased risk in B2B marketing strategies as compared to B2C marketing strategies. However, successful B2B marketing can result in major benefits, such as long-term contracts and high-value transactions. [Saha et al. \(2014\)](#)

Payment and transaction: the payment type varies both in B2B and B2C marketing strategies. In B2B, instant payment might not be required due to several reasons:

- Credit relationship, which allow the company pay with installments or 30-60-90 days later
- Invoice-based transactions, which allow the firm to pay at a later date.

In B2C, most of the time, the payment for a good or service should be made immediately. It can be in cash, QR code, or by credit/debit card, or some of the firms have started to integrate with extra services that allow customers to pay for a company's item or service in installments as well.

Usage of mass media: Due to different target characteristics and sales dynamics, the use of mass media in marketing differs between B2B (business-to-business) and B2C (business-to-consumer) strategies. Mass media is inefficient for B2B marketing due to the niche nature of the audience, the complexity of decision-making processes, and the emphasis on relationship-building. In contrast, B2C marketing relies on mass media as a vital instrument to reach a large consumer base, profit on impulse purchases, develop brand visibility, and trigger connections with consumers through entertainment and lifestyle-focused campaigns. The strategic selection of marketing channels is fundamentally related to the unique goals, target audience, and product characteristics of each marketing context. [Saha et al. \(2014\)](#)

2.6.1 B2B and B2C Social Media Strategies.

As mentioned earlier, in these digital times, the importance of social media for small and big businesses cannot be overemphasised. As a cost-effective and powerful tool, social media platforms play a key role in establishing a strong online presence and connecting with target audiences. Today, marketing strategies are not just about traditional channels (TV, Radio,

newspapers). Social media now serves as a dynamic arena for companies to showcase their products or services around the world. ([Rosário and Dias, 2023](#))

According to [Li and Larimo \(2020\)](#), Social Media strategy can be defined as a strategy with a focus on customer engagement. Its purpose is to generate, integrate, and reconfigure social media resources in order to achieve specific marketing objectives. The premise of social media strategies is to capitalize on social media interactions and customer engagement so as to generate marketing resources.

There is another meaning, defined by [Ananda, Hernández-García et al., 2016](#), that states that social media strategy is the integrated method and set of actions by which a company or organization expects to fulfill its marketing objectives and address the needs of its target market utilizing social media tools.

The social media strategies for B2B and B2C are different. Also, there are different methods for each social media business page for each social network. But there are several things both sectors of business should do before starting to implement the strategies in their social media channels:

- *Choosing a social platform:*

Companies need to understand the nature of each social network, as they have different functionalities and audiences. This requires understanding the following:

Target Audience: Understanding the demographics and preferences of your target audience is paramount. Carefully analyse the user base of each platform and choose those where your audience is most active to maximise engagement and exposure.

Industry: The nature of your business plays a crucial role when choosing a platform.

Industries with visually appealing products may thrive on platforms like Instagram, while B2B businesses may find LinkedIn to be a more effective means of professional networking.

Business goals: Align your platform choice with your business goals. If brand awareness is a priority, platforms like Instagram and Twitter, with their emphasis on real-time interaction, can be effective. For engaging potential B2B customers, the platform of choice may be the professional networking medium LinkedIn.

Resources and content type: Consider the resources available and the type of content you can consistently create. Video-focused companies may favour YouTube, while companies with strong visuals may thrive on platforms like Instagram and Pinterest. Evaluate your content creation capabilities and choose platforms that match your strengths.

Interaction style: Different platforms foster different interaction styles. If your business benefits from constant conversations, quick updates, and a constant flow of information, platforms like Twitter may be a good fit. Conversely, if your content is visually oriented and

requires a more thorough approach, platforms like Instagram or TikTok may be a better fit. ([Sadovnikova, 2019](#))

- Define the goals and objectives of the social strategy:

Before beginning your social media journey, businesses need to set clear and measurable goals. These goals serve as benchmarks for measuring the success of social media efforts.

An effective SMM strategy answers five questions: ([Kudriavtceva, V., 2018](#))

1. Who are we selling to?
2. What are we selling?
3. How do we sell effectively?
4. When and where should company promote the product?
5. What features of the product are to be developed?

Also, forming goals is easier with the SMART model: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. ([Bjerke and Renger, 2017](#))

Figure 15: SMART goals



Source: Author's creation based on [Bjerke and Renger, 2017](#).

- Define the target audience

Developing an SMM strategy becomes easier if you know exactly who the company's strategy is aimed at. The right audience profile will help not only to increase the number of users in the community but also to reduce advertising costs. With targeted promotion, the conversion rate is higher than with chaotic advertising across all channels.

Almost no one enters the community with the specific purpose of "buying", so every commercial offer should be advertised. Therefore, it is important for companies to prepare the advertised entry to promote it to narrow audiences. ([Luo, Pan, et al., 2018](#))

To do this, you need to divide the target audience into smaller segments that need to be described (for example, what this audience likes, what their hobbies are, and how they spend their free time).

The more details you have, the easier it is to make an accurate offer to each audience segment. For example, a computer advertisement will appeal to people in the freelancing industry by emphasising that the computer has high power for online work. Also, computers will be interesting to students if you make an advertisement with emphasis on the fact that the laptop is light and holds a charge for a long time, as well as introduce the possibility of payment by multiple payments, as students do not often have money for a large purchase.

In one company, the target audience of different products may not overlap at all. For example, banks often make products for young people, pensioners, families, the premium class, and even for children. Therefore, different ads will be set up for each profile. It is unlikely that a student would be interested in deposits for pensioners.

- Engagement and Interaction.

Audience engagement plays an important role in building a community around your brand. Not only is it a way to maintain loyalty, but it's also a great opportunity to get feedback from your audience.

Content personalisation: What are some ways to personalise content to engage your audience? Striving to create content that responds to your subscribers' needs and interests is key to successful engagement.

Replies and comments: Be prepared for posts and comments from your audience. A quick and personal response to a question or piece of feedback can make the interaction more meaningful for your subscribers.

Organize contests and promotions: Contests and promotions on social media can drive engagement and spread your content to a wider audience.

Ideas and suggestions: Your audience can be a source of great ideas. Try conducting surveys or asking questions to find out what your followers are interested in.

Engagement and interaction are not only a way to keep things engaging, but they're also a great opportunity to learn more about your audience and give them what they want.

[\(Onofrei, Filieri et al., 2022\)](#)

- Validate KPIs.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in social media marketing are measurable values that demonstrate how effectively a company is achieving its key business objectives on social media platforms. These indicators can include metrics such as engagement rates, reach, conversion rates, click-through rates, and more. By tracking and analyzing KPIs, businesses can assess the success of their social media marketing efforts and make data-driven decisions to optimize their strategies. [\(Gräve, 2019\)](#)

According to [Gross, von Wangenheim \(2022\)](#), Key Social Media KPIs:

1. Reach KPIs: Track the amount of users who interact with your social media channels to gain insights into audience size, growth trends, and brand awareness.
2. Impressions: This metric reflects how frequently your post appears in someone's feed or timeline, regardless of active participation.
3. Follower count: The number of followers on your social media channel at a given time.
4. Audience growth rate: Measures the change in follower count over time, emphasizing the success of obtaining or losing followers.

Figure 16: Awareness Metrics, Audience Growth Rate

Awareness Metrics	Audience Growth Rate
$\frac{\text{New New Followers}}{\text{Total Audience}} \times 100 = \text{Growth Rate Percentage}$	

Source: Author's creation based on [Gross, von Wangenheim \(2022\)](#)

5. Reach: The number of people who have seen a post since it was published, influenced by online audience presence and content quality, which provides information about audience preferences.

Figure 17: Awareness Metrics, Post Reach

Awareness Metrics	Post Reach
$\frac{\text{Measure Post Reach}}{\text{Total Followers}} \times 100 = \text{Post Reach Percentage}$	

Source: Author's creation based on [Gross, von Wangenheim \(2022\)](#)

6. Potential Reach: Determines the possible audience exposure throughout the reporting period. It takes into account the influence of followers sharing a post with their network, with 2% to 5% of their followers adding to the potential reach of the post.

Figure 18: Awareness Metrics, Potential Reach

Awareness Metrics	Potential Reach
$\text{Total Number of Mentions} \times \text{Followers of Account That Mentioned You} = \text{Theoretical Reach}$	

Source: Author's creation based on [Gross, von Wangenheim \(2022\)](#)

7. Social Share of Voice: This indicator measures the frequency of brand mentions in contrast to competitors, suggesting your brand's significance in the industry.

Figure 19: Awareness Metrics, Social Share of Voice

$$\frac{\text{Brand Mentions}}{\text{Total Mentions (Your Mentions + Competitor Mentions)}} \times 100 = \text{SSoV Percentage}$$

Source: Author's creation based on [Gross, von Wangenheim \(2022\)](#)

- Research brand reputations and analyse competitors.

The image of a company is formed through associations that appear due to brand dialogue with the consumer.

In practice, there are three components of brand image:

- Strong associations that fix the required image in the consumer's mind.
 - Attractive offers are related to the solution of the main problems of the client and correspond to his desires.
 - Unique advantages reflect the competitive advantages of the product. ([Alturas, Oliveira, 2016](#))
- Creating a brand image.

Maintaining a consistent brand image on social media is fundamental to building trust and recognition. On any social network, a consistent visual identity and messaging strategy reinforces brand recognition and creates a sense of trustworthiness in the eyes of your audience. ([Benhardy and Hardiyansyah, 2020](#))

There are the following points to maintain consistent visual identification ([Cheng Chu Chan and Chen 2023](#)):

Unified brand elements: Ensure consistent use of logos, colour schemes, and typography across all platforms to create a unified brand presence.

Visual storytelling: Create a consistent narrative using visual elements such as images and videos to consistently communicate the brand's story and values.

Publication schedule: Maintain a regular publishing schedule to establish the rhythm and predictability of audience interaction with the brand.

- Creating a content plan.

Developing a content strategy involves understanding your target audience, selecting the right types of content, and setting a publishing schedule. A well-defined strategy ensures that

content is aligned with business objectives and resonates with audiences. There are several types of content that companies should generate and post on their profiles:

- Creating engaging content that is shareable:

Engagement is key to a successful social media presence. Create content that sparks conversations, asks questions, and encourages sharing.

- Multimedia content, such as visually appealing images, infographics, and videos, tends to be more shareable and memorable.
- User-generated content:

Encourage your audience to create and share content related to your brand. User-generated content not only provides authenticity, but also builds a sense of community. Recognize and showcase user-generated content to create a collaborative and interactive online environment. ([Kee and Yazdanifard, 2015](#)).

Conclusion

To summarize, the emergence of social media has profoundly impacted the marketing environment, with a focus on both business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) sectors. The study of social media marketing, strategies, and the different roles they play in B2B and B2C contexts demonstrated the platform's dynamic character.

Social media marketing has become an essential tool for businesses looking to connect with their target audiences, raise brand awareness, and increase sales. The distinction between B2B and B2C marketing emphasizes the varied techniques required to successfully navigate these disparate markets. Understanding the distinct dynamics and objectives of each sector is critical for adapting social media campaigns to meet the specific demands and preferences of businesses or individual consumers.

As social media evolves, marketers must remain on top of current trends. The rapid rate of change in the digital ecosystem necessitates a proactive approach to implementing emerging technologies, platforms, and tactics. The combination of content development, influencer marketing, and immersive experiences has emerged as a dominant trend, shaping the future of social media marketing.

In the future, businesses must change their social media strategy to meet the changing preferences of their target audiences. The combination of artificial intelligence, augmented reality, social media trends and data analytics is set to play an increasingly important role in determining the future of social media marketing.

As the boundary between B2B and B2C methods blurs, firms must adopt a comprehensive and adaptable approach to compete in the ever-changing social media market. Finally, the

evolution of social media marketing reflects the broader digital change of our linked society, where agility, creativity, and strategic thinking are essential for success in the competitive world of social media.

III: Social Media in the B2C Hospitality Sector

3.1.1 Overview of the Hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry includes a diverse range of businesses and services that serve the requirements and wishes of travellers, tourists, and locals seeking lodging, food, and entertainment. This industry is crucial to the worldwide economy and is distinguished by its numerous segments, which include hotels, restaurants, travel and tourism, event management, and others. [\(King, 1995\)](#) There are various industry-specific important components, trends, challenges, and opportunities.

Previously, the hospitality industry was primarily linked with accommodation services, then catering was added, and nowadays, more and more leisure services such as travel, attractions, meetings, and others are beginning to relate to the hospitality industry. [\(Langviniene and Daunoravičiūtė, 2015\)](#)

There are several segments of the hospitality industry:

- Accommodations include hotels, B&Bs, motels, resorts, hostels, camping, and vacation rentals.
- Catering: restaurants, cafes, catering services, buffets, fast food chains, and bars.
- Travel and tourism: travel agencies, tour operators, cruise lines, airlines, and transportation services.
- Other hospital services: MICE, which stands for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions; Spa & Wellness; gambling clubs; and entertainment. [\(Hassanien, Dale, et al., 2010\)](#).

There are two main types of hospitality: private and commercial.

1) Private hospitality - was created by Heal [\(1990\)](#) and means the relationship act between individuals in a private setting like home.

2) Commercial hospitality is when food, beverages, housing, and amusement are offered for profit. Commercial hospitality developed from accommodating aristocrats and European nobility in magnificence while also providing basic accommodations for ordinary people.

[\(Rutes and Penner, 1985\)](#) Examples of modern commercial hospitality are NH, Best Western, Intercontinental, and others.

The hotel business is a significant economic driver, generating trillions of dollars in revenue annually and employing millions of people globally. Moreover, in some countries, hospitality

is the main source of income for both the population and the whole government. When it comes to the hospitality industry, there are major factors that influence operational procedures and decisions regarding strategy within establishments:

Guest experience management:

The guest experience is crucial to the hotel sector. Providing guests with memorable and good experiences is more than a goal; it is a strategic requirement. Every interaction a guest has with the facility, from the time they make a reservation to the time they check out, helps to shape their opinion of it. The focus on guest happiness frequently includes personalized services, attention to detail, and a determination to exceed expectations. ([Kandampully, Zhang et al., 2017](#))

Tech trends in hospitality:

Technology is continuing to transform how hospitality services are offered. Mobile applications for easy check-ins, keyless room entry, and in-room tablets for controlling everything are becoming more widespread. Artificial intelligence is being used to anticipate guest preferences through chatbots, virtual concierge services, and forecasting. The implementation of technology not only improves operational efficiency but also has a significant impact on the overall guest experience. ([Pillai, Rajasshrie, 2020](#))

The impact of social media:

Social media platforms have become effective instruments for shaping the reputation of hospitality facilities. Guests frequently share their experiences, opinions, and images online, affecting the purchasing decisions of new customers. Social media marketing, influencer collaborations, and a strategic online presence are all important components of a hospitality company's marketing strategy. ([Gomez-Suarez and Veloso, 2022](#))

The impact on the economy and employment:

The hospitality business has a substantial economic impact and creates jobs globally. The sector offers employment opportunities at all skill levels, from entry-level to management. Furthermore, tourism created by the hospitality business helps boost regional and national economies. ([Thams, Zech, et al., 2020](#))

Event and Conference Management:

The hospitality business is involved in hosting events, conferences, and meetings. The MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) industry requires specialized services such as conference halls, audiovisual equipment, and event planning experience. Many hotels and resorts have specialists as part of their event management teams to meet the demands of business customers. ([Anas, Maddiah, 2020](#))

Ethical and Responsible Tourism:

The hotel industry is increasingly focusing on ethical and responsible practices. Businesses are becoming more aware of their environmental impact, implementing eco-friendly practices, minimizing waste, and helping local communities. Certifications and recognition for sustainable practices are increasingly important for building an advantageous business image. ([Fennell and Bowyer, 2020](#))

To summarize, the hospitality industry, which includes lodging, catering, travel, and specialized services like MICE, is an important global economic driver. Commercial hospitality, as represented by major hotel chains, has historically generated significant revenue and employment. Key industry influences include a focus on guest experience, developments in technology, social media impact, economic contributions, event management, and an increasing emphasis on ethical and responsible tourism practices. The industry's flexibility and various offerings make it a critical participant in changing economies and addressing current socioeconomic and environmental concerns.

3.1.2 SWOT Analysis

In the ever-changing world of the hospitality sector, the symbiotic relationship between difficulties and opportunities serves as the foundation for businesses seeking to navigate and grow in the face of perpetual change. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the industry's resilience, requiring businesses to quickly adjust to significant economic, social, and technological obstacles. ([Alotaibi and Khan, 2022](#)) Businesses responded to the crisis with a variety of techniques, with social media emerging as an important tool for communication, marketing, and relationship-building within the hospitality sector. This section does a thorough SWOT analysis, assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats connected with the use of social media in the hospitality industry.

As the sector faces difficulties and takes on new possibilities, understanding the dynamics of social media becomes critical for strategic positioning and long-term success in an environment that values adaptation.

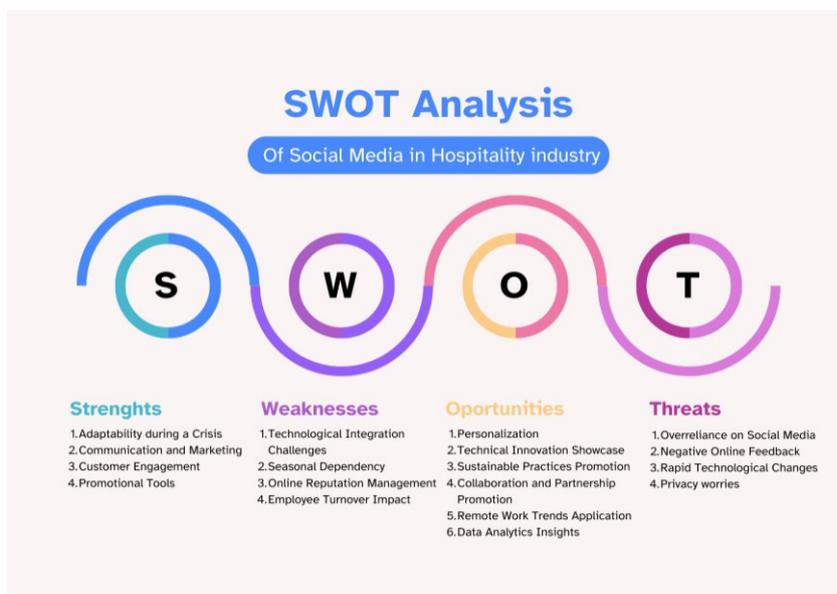
SWOT matrix, or analysis - is a technique that is used to identify four business aspects (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats).

It is one of the oldest and most used business tools worldwide. ([Puyt, Lie, et al., 2023](#))

This analysis helps to discover critical aspects that can impact decision-making and overall strategy.

- **Strengths:** Internal characteristics that provide a competitive edge include competent employees, high brand recognition, and efficient operations.
- **Weaknesses:** Internal constraints that impede performance include restricted resources, a lack of experience, and outmoded technology.
- **Opportunities:** External variables that create ideal conditions for growth, such as developing markets, technical advancements, or shifts in customer tastes.
- **Threats:** External factors that may have a negative impact on performance include economic downturns, greater competition, and regulatory changes. ([Gretzky, 2010](#))

Figure 20: SWOT analysis of Social Media in Hospitality Industry



Source: Author’s creation based on previous literature of [Gretzky, \(2010\)](#).

In the case of Social Media in the Hospitality sector, the SWOT analysis will consist of:

Strengths:

Adaptability during a Crisis: Social media networks were critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping businesses to quickly adjust by promoting contactless services, delivery options, and safety precautions.

Communication and Marketing: Social media made direct communication with customers possible, allowing firms to offer services, convey safety information, and maintain a visible online presence.

Customer Engagement: Social media allows businesses to interact with customers in real-time, answering complaints, giving updates, and developing a sense of community.

Promotional Tools: Hospitality businesses use social media to promote specials, discounts, and loyalty programs, which help them generate money and retain customers.

Weaknesses:

Technological Integration Challenges: Integrating social media into larger technical plans can be difficult, requiring significant investment and skill for effortless involvement.

Seasonal Dependency: The impact of social media marketing varies seasonally and needs customized approaches to adapt to changing consumer habits.

Online Reputation Management: Dealing with competition and online reviews on social media requires ongoing monitoring and active participation, which presents a challenge for resource-intensive management.

Employee Turnover Impact: High turnover harms a company's social media image, stressing the significance of investing in employee satisfaction.

Opportunities:

Personalization: Using social media data to tailor advertising and offer personalized promotions improves the entire customer experience and fosters loyalty.

Technical Innovation Showcase: Using social media to highlight technical advances, virtual experiences, and innovative services entices tech-savvy customers.

Sustainable Practices Promotion: Promoting sustainable practices on social media appeals to environmentally conscious consumers and increases company loyalty.

Collaboration and Partnership Promotion: Social media platforms are used to promote collaborations and partnerships, raising awareness and reaching a larger audience.

Remote Work Trends Application: Highlighting remote work-friendly amenities and experiences on social media is consistent with the growing trend of remote workers and digital nomads.

Data Analytics Insights: Social media analytics provide useful insights into client behavior, assisting in the construction of personalized marketing techniques and improving overall strategy

Threats:

Overreliance on Social Media: Businesses that rely significantly on social media for communication and marketing risk becoming exposed to platform changes, algorithm adjustments, or downtime.

Negative Online Feedback: Negative reviews and comments on social media can have a substantial influence on the reputation of a hospitality firm, necessitating ongoing reputation management.

Rapid Technological Changes: Businesses may find it difficult to keep up with changing social media trends and features due to the rapid rate of technological innovation.

Privacy worries: Growing worries about privacy on social media may result in changes in user behaviour or more challenging regulations, influencing corporate marketing efforts.

To summarize, social media is an important tool in the hotel business, providing potential for innovation, personalized involvement, and sustainable practices. However, organizations must deal with issues such as technical integration, online reputation management, and possible dangers from rapid technological progress and privacy concerns. Strategic use of social media can play an important role in the industry's resilience and success, especially during times of crisis.

3.2.1 Consumer Behaviour and Social Media:

As stated before, social media are internet channels that allow users to interact with large or specific communities that benefit from user-generated content in real-time ([Carr and Hayes, 2015](#)). The importance of using social media is determined by the interaction or connections with other users and the content created by a company or person. Social media marketing strategy refers to a comprehensive activity of an organisation that enables, through online communication and influence, the creation of useful strategic tools in the marketing world. ([Li, Larimo, et al., 2020](#))

Social Media's Influence on the Hospitality Industry

Analyzing customer behaviour in the hospitality sector leads to a more in-depth understanding of how people interact with the digital world. The following main points provide information about the numerous ways in which social media affects the landscape of hospitality experiences. ([Benea, 2014](#))

1. Information Search.

Social Media Advertising: Targeted ads on websites such as Facebook and Instagram can increase awareness of hotels, getaway destinations, and offers.

Influencer Recommendations: On social media, influencers frequently post their travel and dining experiences, and their recommendations might influence consumer decisions.

2. Peer influence.

Peer Influence: Social Proof: Consumers trust referrals from friends, family, and peers on social media. Tagged places, check-ins, and shared experiences are all helping generate social proof.

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out): Social media may cause a sense of FOMO in people, influencing them to book a hotel or attend a restaurant because they want to be a part of a popular trend or experience. ([Lau, Lee, et al., 2023](#))

3. Pre-Purchase Decision.

Travelers commonly use platforms such as TripAdvisor, Yelp, and Google Reviews to learn about other people's journeys before making a purchase decision. Positive feedback and high ratings can impact your decision to book a specific hotel, restaurant, or travel service.

User-Generated Content (UGC): Photos and videos published by users on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and Facebook provide genuine insights into the experience at a hotel or restaurant, influencing perceptions and expectations.

4. Real-Time Updates and Feedback.

Social media platforms make it possible for businesses to provide real-time updates on events, special deals, and promotions, attracting customers seeking current and valuable information.

Crisis Communication: During an emergency, social media is an essential tool for organizations to deliver real-time updates on safety precautions, operational modifications, and recovery activities.

Public feedback: Social media offers a public venue for customers to provide good and negative comments. Businesses that respond quickly and effectively to feedback might improve consumer views.

5. Aspirational Travel and Dining.

Influencers promote aspirational travel and dining experiences. Bloggers frequently share dreamlike travel and dining experiences, encouraging followers to visit new places or sample new gastronomic things.

Virtual Tours: Hotels and restaurants use social media to provide virtual tours that allow potential customers to preview the facilities and ambience before making a reservation.

([Wang, 2023](#))

6. Brand Engagement and Loyalty.

Social media allows consumers to interact with hospitality brands. Responding to consumer requests, addressing issues, and giving customized experiences all help develop brand loyalty.

Unique Promotions: Hospitality businesses frequently utilize social media to share unique discounts, promotions, and loyalty programs, which encourage customer retention. ([Rather, Hollebeek, et al., 2024](#))

To summarize, social media has a significant impact on hospitality, and understanding the dynamics is critical. Similarly, hospitality organizations should actively engage with customers and develop new ways to attract them to gain a competitive advantage in the field.

3.3.1 Technology Integration Beyond Social Media

In an age where technology rapidly integrates into every aspect of our daily lives, the hospitality sector is at an important turning point. Guests today expect more than a nice bed and excellent service. They value immersive experiences, individualised touches, and technology's convenience. But how can hoteliers and brand managers in the hospitality industry create the ideal balance between the warmth of traditional hospitality and the technological advances of the digital era? There are several points in the technical sphere that have gained more and more popularity:

1. In 2024, approximately 80 per cent of hotels will use artificial intelligence (AI) Technology. ([Revenue Hub, 2024, February 5](#)) Hotels that use modern technology, such as AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants, can provide customers with 24-hour customer service and personalized help. There are also more and more brands that implement artificial intelligence as an integration with voice assistants. This section investigates how voice-activated technologies contribute to more natural and intuitive interactions, hence improving the guest experience. ([Pillai, Rajasshrie, 2020](#))

2. VR and AR technologies perfectly reflect hotel rooms and services, providing potential visitors with a full 360-degree perspective and successfully visualizing their stay. These events may cause deep feelings, leaving lasting memories of the hotel. However, there is a disclaimer: these technologies may accidentally raise expectations, and any inconsistency between the virtual illustration and reality might lead to disappointment. On the plus side, VR/AR provides a distinct competitive advantage, enabling hotels to stand out. There is also the prospect of expanding to include virtual events or experiences, such as cooking classes or spa treatments. The technology is now available and will continue to develop and be used in the future. ([Nayyar, Mahapatra, et al., 2018](#))

3. Innovations in smart devices and the Internet of Things (IoT) contribute to reforming the technology utilized in hospitality. Smart devices and IoT developments are helping to reform the hospitality industry's technologies. ([Kansakar et al., 2017](#)) There are plenty of examples of how technology is increasingly being used in the hospitality industry, including app-controlled devices, automatic door locks, set-top boxes, thermostats, telephones, light

switches, voice interaction, electric blinds, and other devices networked together to ensure that guests can access the services they require. Using these gadgets improves both the guest's experience and the hotel's efficiency. Hotels will be able to offer additional services at a lower price.

4. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is essential for the hospitality business, providing increased efficiency, mistake reduction, and cost savings. RPA streamlines operations by automating tasks like data input and invoice processing, allowing the workers to focus on improving the visitor experience. RPA's adaptability and scalability assure its continuous relevance in an ever-changing technology context, making it an important strategic tool for being competitive and future-ready. ([Goyal, Nitin, et al., 2021](#))

The integration of technology in the hotel industry is bringing in a new era of client service while also improving service quality and customization. It was predicted that 80% of hotels would be utilizing artificial intelligence and innovations like chatbots and virtual assistants by 2024. VR and AR technologies provide realistic previews of hotel rooms and services, resulting in unique experiences; yet, controlling guest expectations remains an essential factor. Smart gadgets and IoT provide excellent solutions for improving both the guest experience and operational efficiency. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) improves processes, minimizes errors, and lowers costs. It enables hospitality professionals to prioritize improving the client experience while being flexible and able to grow. ([Erdem and Barakazi, 2023](#))

3.5.1 International and Domestic Perspectives

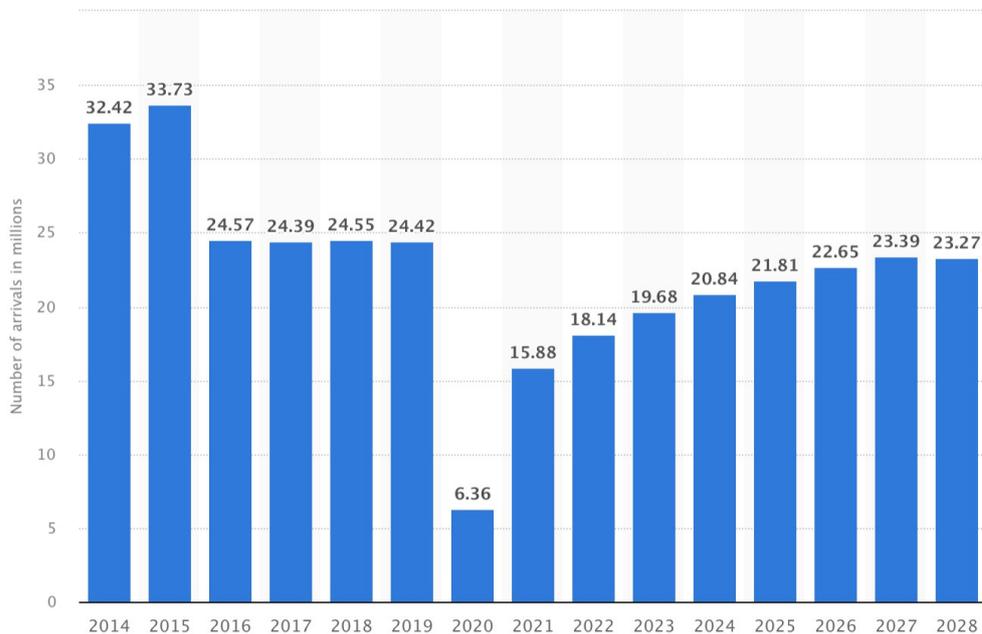
Social media methods in hospitality vary greatly, depending on the country and culture. As an example, Russia was chosen as a country with a high potential for attracting both international tourists and Russians who want to travel around their native country. There are various reasons why Russia is the ideal choice to focus on:

- Entry requirements include, for example, the launch of e-visas and visa-free exchanges with China and Iran. In his remark, [Alexander Musikhin, Vice President of the Association of Tour Operators of Russia \(ATOR\)](#), stated that international organized tourist traffic to Russia is expected to expand three to fourfold on an annualized basis by 2024. This significant development is mostly due to the recent implementation of e-visas and the establishment of visa-free exchanges, particularly with China and Iran. Musikhin underlined that inbound tourist traffic is expected to

increase significantly in 2024 within the organized tourism industry, surpassing levels recorded in 2023.

Aside from that, the number of incoming tourists has been increasing year over year over the past ten years, with the exception of 2020, but when the pandemic has stabilized, the number of tourists has begun to increase again.

Figure 21: Number of international tourist arrivals in Russia from 2014 to 2029



Source: [Statista 2023](#)

- Historical and cultural heritage: Russia has a rich history and cultural heritage, with prominent landmarks, including the Kremlin and Red Square in Moscow, the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, and the medieval cities along the Golden Ring.

Visitors are drawn to Russia's architecture, which includes the brilliant onion domes of St. Basil's Cathedral, the magnificent palaces of the Romanovs, and the traditional wooden constructions seen throughout the country. Russia is home to world-class museums and art collections, such as the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts. ([Kumar and Legashova, 2016](#))

- Trans-Siberian Railway: The Trans-Siberian Railway is one of the world's longest and most recognized train excursions, providing passengers with an unforgettable chance to explore Russia's enormous and diverse landscapes. ([Liliopoulou, Roe et al., 2005](#))
- Natural attractions: Russia is a diverse country that is located on two continents at once: when the sun is warm on one side and warm on the other, and somewhere in Siberia, the air temperature can reach -50 degrees and the daylight hours last only 2-4

hours. Due to its enormous territory, every tourist will find something to do here to his heart's desire. Some of the most popular tourist attractions are Lake Baikal, the world's deepest lake; the Kamchatka Peninsula with volcanic landscapes and geysers; the Caucasus Mountains; and the Golden Ring towns, which are charming historic settlements around Moscow and showcase unique architecture and cultural heritage. ([Ward-Perkins, 2015](#))

Incoming tourists to Russia

Russia attracts a varied range of tourists from all over the world, with people coming from numerous continents and countries. Historical ties, cultural interests, geopolitical relationships, and economic situations all have an impact on the composition of Russia's inbound tourists. Some important groups of tourists are:

European Visitors: Despite of current political situation, there are still many European tourists, particularly those from surrounding countries, who travel to Russia to discover its rich cultural legacy, historical landmarks, and vibrant towns. Countries such as Germany, Estonia and Latvia have traditionally been major providers of European tourism. ([Rostat, 2023](#))

Asian Tourists: Russia receives a significant number of tourists from Asian countries, with China playing an important role. Chinese tourists, in particular, are frequently drawn to Russia's historic landmarks, stunning landscapes, and the distinct cultural experiences given by cities. In 2023, the total number of Chinese who came to Russia was 794.3 thousand. ([Rostat, 2023](#))

Middle Eastern Travelers: Some Middle Eastern tourists are drawn to Russia because of its cultural richness, historical connections, and the opportunity to see both modern cities and more traditional settings. The majority of tourists are from Iran and Turkey. ([Rostat, 2023](#))

American Visitors: Tourists from North and South America, including the United States, Colombia, and Cuba, may be interested in Russia's renowned landmarks, its place in global history, and the country's distinct cultural experiences. ([Rostat, 2023](#))

CIS Visitors: Countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which includes former Soviet republics, frequently bring the largest number of tourists to Russia because of common historical, cultural, and linguistic ties. In 2023, people from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan made up the majority of the total number of incoming foreigners. ([Rostat, 2023](#))

In January-December 2023, the number of foreign citizens' trips to Russia increased by 18.6% compared to the same period of 2022, according to published statistics of the Border

Service of the Federal Security Service, which was analysed by RBC. In 2023, foreigners crossed the Russian border 15.4 million times - in 2022, the number of entries was around 13 million. ([RBC,2024](#))

The total statistics of incoming tourists in 2023 are shown up below:

Figure 22: From which countries did foreigners enter Russia most often in 2023?



Source: [RBC,2024](#)

In 2023, foreign citizens travelled to Russia mainly from the countries of the near abroad. The leaders in terms of entry were citizens of Kazakhstan - the number of trips from there increased year-on-year by 26.7% to 2.4 million. The flow from Uzbekistan (+52%) and Tadzhikistan (+36%) increased significantly in annual terms. China and Mongolia were among the top ten non-CIS countries. The number of entries from Mongolia increased by 79% to 311.4 thousand. Chinese citizens in 2023 came to Russia six times more than in 2022; the number of trips from this country amounted to 794.3 thousand (130.4 thousand a year ago). ([RBC,2024](#))

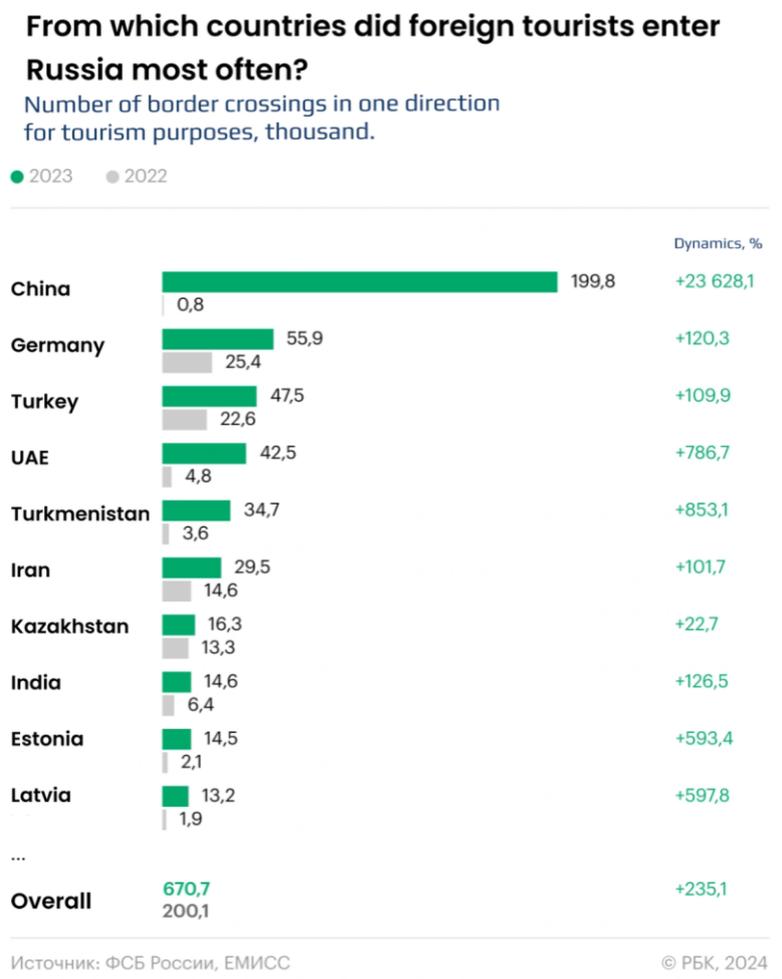
Travel from China to Russia has started to gradually recover after the lifting of coronavirus restrictions, the launch of e-visa for foreign citizens, and the resumption of visa-free exchange for organised tourists. But so far, the flow from China is still far from the level of the record year of 2019, when the Chinese made 2.2 million trips to Russia, taking into account all purposes of visit.

How did European travellers enter Russia?

The number of EU citizens travelling to Russia in January-December 2023 increased by 30.8% relative to 2022 - the Federal Security Service recorded a total of 558,100 trips compare to 426,400 trips a year earlier. The number of trips increased both from European countries neighbouring Russia - Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Estonia, Poland, and from those countries with which there is no common land border - Germany, Cyprus, Italy and Spain. Estonian and German citizens made the most visits - 115.8 thousand and 101.6 thousand trips respectively (annual growth was 75.6% and 50.1%). The flow from Poland (+57%), Latvia (+31%), Lithuania (+25) and Italy (+24%) also increased significantly. [\(RBC,2024\)](#)

Among the European countries from where the number of trips to Russia decreased most noticeably over the year were: Ireland - 1.2 thousand trips (-51% compared to the previous year), Croatia - 3.1 thousand trips (-34%), Denmark - 1.4 thousand (-30%), Hungary - 3.6 thousand (-24%) and Romania - 5.5 thousand trips (-16%).

Figure 23: From which countries did foreign tourists enter Russia most often



Source: [RBC, 2024](#)

In January-December 2023, foreigners visited Russia for tourist purposes 670.7 thousand times - it is 3.5 times more than in 2022 (200 thousand). The leading country by the number of tourist trips of citizens to Russia in 2023 was China. In total, during the reporting period, the Federal Security Service recorded 199.8 thousand trips of Chinese citizens to Russia for tourist purposes, which is 237 times more than in the previous year (842). The visa-free regime for groups of tourists between Russia and China was launched in August 2023, but tour groups went only in autumn. From that moment until the end of the year, according to the estimates of the Association of Tour Operators of Russia (ATOR), almost 48.3 thousand tourists from China arrived through the visa-free channel. The growth of tourist trips from China could also be influenced by the de facto ban on group travel for Chinese to most European countries. As a result, some Chinese tourists, who prefer travelling in groups, reoriented to Russia, explained in ATOR. ([ATOR, 2024](#)) In 2024, visa-free tourist traffic from China, according to the association's forecasts, will continue to grow. ([RBC,2024](#)) In addition to China, the top five countries in terms of the number of foreigners' trips to Russia were Germany (the flow compared to the previous year increased 2.2 times), Turkey, which also showed a twofold increase, the United Arab Emirates and Turkmenistan (an increase of 8 and 9.5 times, respectively). However, not all of the foreign citizens who formally declared tourist purposes of visit actually came to Russia with the purpose of this or that type of holiday, noted in ATOR. ([ATOR, 2024](#)) For example, citizens from Turkmenistan, Germany and Turkey often enter on tourist visas for private or business purposes. Taking this into account, the number of tourists visiting Russia in 2023 ATOR estimated at 580 thousand people. ([ATOR, 2024](#))

Among the countries from which foreigners came to Russia for tourist purposes, there were also neighbouring European countries: citizens of Estonia made 14.5 thousand trips (7 times more than in 2022), Latvia - 13.2 thousand trips (2.6 times more). Poland and Finland showed the greatest increase in the number of tourist trips, although the multiple growth of trips in 2023 occurred against the background of a decrease in the number of entries in 2022. For example, Polish citizens entered Russia for tourist purposes 13,100 times in 2023, 21 times more than in 2022, when Polish visitors entered only 617 times. The flow from Finland with tourist purposes increased 12 times: its citizens made 7 thousand such trips to Russia (574 in 2022). ([RBC,2024](#))

Based on the data of the graphs above, it's noticeable, that most tourists come to Russia from post-Soviet countries, which is obvious, as most of them have relatives or friends living in Russia, and many of them also come here for work purposes. Another factor in the large number of tourists from CIS countries is visa formalities, as residents of these countries can stay in the territory of the Russian Federation for up to 90 days as tourists.

Another large percentage of incoming tourists are from the People's Republic of China. Due to the visa-free regime when travelling as a group, many Chinese tourists arrive in Russia as part of a group. Compared to 2019, the tourist flow has not yet fully recovered, and there are the following reasons for this:

- Security concerns: People's perceptions of safety and security can impact their travel selections. Crime, political conflicts, war and safety concerns in particular regions of Russia may deter some Chinese tourists.
- Media Influence: Media reports can impact public opinions, and bad portrayals of Russia in the media may discourage some Chinese citizens from visiting the country.
- Payment issues: international payment systems like MasterCard, Visa and American Express do not operate in Russia from March 2022 because of sanctions. It is one of the factors, why tourists avoid coming to Russia, because they want to avoid bringing a lot of cash on them. With Chinese travellers things go more simply, as in the most popular places companies in hospitality have adapted to Chinese travellers' needs by offering different types of payment such as Alipay, WeChat or Union pay.
- Language barriers. Communication between Chinese and Russian might be difficult due to their linguistic differences. While there may be English speakers in metropolitan areas, linguistic barriers can still exist in some situations. Coinciding with the situation, Russian hospitality businesses, as well as the government itself, are trying to adapt to Chinese travellers by translating signage, restaurant menus, and signs into Chinese, and hiring more employees who speak Chinese.
- Difficulties when travelling alone. As has been said before, if a Chinese tourist is travelling to Russia on his own, he will need a visa, which is not that easy and inexpensive to obtain. Also, travelling on your own is often less profitable and more complicated - with an organised tour, a Chinese tourist will not think about how to book tickets or a hotel, exchange money and just ask the guide for advice. But group programmes are not yet so extensive and mostly cover only popular cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg. Although Vladivostok, Kamchatka, Sakhalin, Altai and

Baikal, which are not so far from the Chinese border, would also be of interest to Chinese tourists.

Solutions for travelling to Russia

As mentioned before, due to sanctions against Russia, there are a lot of challenges in travelling to Russia these days. But despite these factors, there are still tourists who choose Russia as their vacation destination and they come to visit the biggest country in the world. There are several challenges and ways of solving them when you go to Russia:

- 1) How to get to Russia? There are not as many ways to travel to Russia as there used to be before. Russian air companies are banned in most countries and as a counter-sanction - Russia banned some air companies from flying over the country as an act of revenge. Today, the easiest ways to travel to Russia are through Turkey, Armenia, Serbia, UAE and Armenia. In this case, you can buy tickets with Visa, Master card or American Express card.
- 2) How to travel inside Russia? You can not buy tickets on the train's official website (RZD) as it does not operate abroad or allow you to pay with international cards. That's why most of the travellers in Russia buy the train ticket at the ticket office (which is not very convenient, because some of the routes are popular and they sell out pretty fast) or using different aggregator websites (RussianTrain or Kazakh Tickets.kz, which allow buying tickets with an international card). For air tickets, it is also possible to use an international card while booking on Aviasales or Trip.com.
- 3) How to book accommodation? Since 2022, the most common platforms like Booking.com and Airbnb.com do not exist in Russia anymore. So for most travellers to Russia, there is a challenge how can they book accommodation in Russia? There are different ways tourists can do it:

Using Zenhotels.com. That's the most popular website to book a place in Russia for foreigners. It has an easy and multilingual interface, has lots of opinions all over the country, and a way to pay by international card, PayPal or cash upon arrival.

Using hotels' websites or other aggregator websites, book the hotel with an option to pay during check-in.

- 4) How to get a visa? For most nationalities, a visa is essential to travel to Russia. Thanks to new regulations, from 1st of August 2023, for 55 nationalities, including the citizens of the United States, European Union and United Kingdom. To be eligible for an e-visa, travellers must have a valid passport with at least six months of validity remaining beyond the intended date of entry into Russia. The incoming tourists must

also provide proof of onward travel from Russia and have sufficient funds to support themselves during their stay. E-visa is valid for 60 days from the date of issue, and the amount of days a tourist can stay in Russia during this period is 16 days. It is only valid for a single entry, which means that once a traveller leaves Russia, he needs to reapply for an e-visa again. A foreigner can get an e-visa if he travels to Russia with the following purposes:

- Tourism
- Business
- Sport relations
- Cultural relations
- Humanitarian reasons
- Scientific-technical relations

The process of getting an e-visa is the following:

Figure 24: How to get an e-visa?



Source: Consular portal of the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation https://electronic-visa.kdmid.ru/index_en.html

If the traveller wants to stay more than 16 days, he comes to Russia with another purpose (i.e. for studying proposers) or he is a citizen of the country which is not in the eligible list for E-visa, that person needs to apply for a regular visa in a Consulate of his residence.

- 5) How to pay? Nowadays, there are several ways how a foreigner can pay in Russia:
- Bringing cash, which he can change upon arrival in banks to rubles
 - Grabbing a card with the Chinese payment system “Union Pay”
 - Paying using Chinese types of payment such as “Union pay” card, or pay via Alipay or WeChat (but there are not a lot of places where you can pay this way)
 - Open a Russian card in one of the banks, which allows a person to insert cash and pay by card later. To open an account in a Russian bank, a person will need a passport and visa. (Irena Domingo, 2023)

- Russia has developed facilities to help non-Russian-speaking guests. Many organizations, including hotels, restaurants, and tourist-oriented companies, provide services in English, such as menus and signs. Tourist Information Centers at popular tourist destinations frequently offer English-speaking staff who may aid with maps and directions. Choosing guided tours ensures clear communication, with English-speaking guides delivering information on local attractions. English-language signage and maps are common in tourist areas, transportation hubs, and popular sites. Additionally, metro stations in big cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg are labelled in both Russian and English, making public transportation easier for non-Russian speakers.

Domestic travellers

Pandemic times and an unstable political situation have changed the thinking of many Russians in favour of domestic tourism. More and more people every year revise their plans for holidays in another country for holidays in Russia. According to [Sergey Romashkin, vice-president of ATOR, director of tour operator Dolphin](#), in 2022 the growth in the industry was 10% compared to 2021, and this result can be called "good". The top 5 leading regions in 2022 include Krasnodar Krai (+1% in terms of bookings by 2021), Caucasian Mineralnye Vody (+41%), Dagestan (+53%), Moscow (+34%) and St. Petersburg (+37%).

According to the ATOR Vice President's estimates, the factors of domestic tourism growth in 2022 were the long-term trend of increasing popularity of domestic travel, market recovery after the removal of COVID restrictions, the implementation of the tourist cashback programme, the closure of air links with some countries, and a significant increase in prices for tours to foreign destinations. ([Atorus, 2023](#))

The government makes easier to travel for tourists and at the same time improving the ways of encouraging hotels, motels, restaurants and other objects of the hospitality sector to stay on the market. For example, at the end of 2023, the third stage of the programme of preferential loans for large hotels was launched. The government also expanded support for the creation of year-round amusement parks, water parks and ski resorts. By the beginning of February 2024, the Ministry of Economic Development received more than 100 projects with a loan portfolio of 318 billion rubles, said Minister of Economic Development Reshetnikov Maxim. ([Tadviser, 2024](#))

Along with the development of tourism within the country, the income of companies and the number of requests for accommodation are also growing. That is why most accommodation

facilities are now set to increase their room availability. Support measures from the government are also focused on this area. One of the key programmes is the preferential lending programme. ([Tadviser, 2024](#))

From the side of travellers, the government stimulates Russians to travel inside the country implementing the next steps:

- Cashback for travelling. In 2020, Rostourism focused on domestic travel and launched a state programme to support domestic tourism called Tourist Cashback. Its essence is that Russians can receive a partial refund for travelling within Russia. You can get it for buying a package tour, booking a hotel, sanatorium or boarding house. The partners were tour operators, hoteliers and travel aggregators, totalling more than 2,300 organisations in the tourism and hospitality sector. The promotion is going during low-season, which makes Russians to travel during not-peak time exploring different regions and receive up to 20% of the price they spent back. To participate in the program, Russians need to log in on a special loyalty website, then book a tour or accommodation for minimum 4 nights and pay with card, which has “MIR” payment system (analog of Visa and Master Card, which allows you to pay in Russia and some other post-soviet countries). ([Duma.gov, 2020](#))
- The digitalisation of tourism. For example, portals and mobile applications that allow tourists to learn about nearby tourist sites, develop their own itinerary, purchase tickets for events. ([Tadviser, 2024](#)) "Yandex" has launched a technology that displays information about a tourist attraction when a smartphone camera is pointed at it. ([Travel.Yandex, 2024](#))
- Subsidised tickets. Another way to travel around the country is to buy subsidised tickets. In the past, such tickets could only be purchased by residents of the Far East, young people, disabled people or pensioners, but now these tickets are available to everyone. The money for tickets was allocated from the state budget. This is how the authorities support unpopular routes and reduce the cost of flights for passengers. The list of destinations is approved by Rosaviation every year. And only airlines that have passed a competitive selection process are entitled to subsidised flights. According to the data for 2024, everyone can buy tickets under the programme of subsidised interregional flights without additional documents and requirements. The flight routes do not include flights from or to Moscow, and the aircraft are predominantly Russian. There are 235 destinations on the list of where to fly to. Of these, 49 are new, for example from Gorno-Altai to Orenburg, Surgut and Ulan-

Ude. The special fare applies to both round-trip flights. The purpose of this assistance is to help unpopular destinations attract more tourists from different parts of the country, and to encourage travelling within the country among residents.

Methods for Attracting Tourists to Russia through Social Media

Given the current geopolitical issues and the opening of borders owing to the removal of COVID limitations, there are new chances for tourism in Russia. To fully capitalize on these potential and address the issues highlighted, social media marketing becomes an essential component of attracting more international and domestic tourists.

1. Promote Opportunities: Use social media to announce the removal of COVID limitations and the opening of borders, highlighting the increased accessibility for passengers from previously closed nations.

- Highlight Russia's numerous tourism prospects, with an emphasis on unique experiences that are in line with contemporary travel trends.

2. International Events and Dialogue: To promote cross-cultural discussion through tourism, use social media to spread information about foreign events in Russia.

- Encourage participation and discussion on social media platforms to foster a sense of community among foreign travellers.

3. Addressing Issues: - Use social media to address worries about visa and currency restrictions, complex logistics, and inadequate marketing policies. Provide educational and reassuring information.

- Highlight active projects and efforts that attempt to improve infrastructure, improve logistics, or overcome regulatory challenges.

4. Negative perceptions:

- Use social media to combat unfavourable perceptions by posting positive tales, testimonies, and experiences from international tourists who have visited Russia.

- Implement social media efforts aimed at changing attitudes by emphasizing the country's diversified culture, warm hospitality, and unique attractions.

5. Marketing and Information Sharing:

- Increase the visibility of Russia's tourism potential by employing effective marketing methods on social media.

- Improve Russian-language sites and create multilingual, user-friendly portals that provide full information to foreign travellers.

6. Customizing tourism products:

- Adapt social media material to meet various tourist groups' individual needs and tastes. For example, a client from India is a traveller who wants to return home with new knowledge, vivid stories, and pictures to make all his neighbours and friends jealous. To attract an Indian tourist, you need to offer memorable educational and entertaining leisure time and the fulfilment of all wishes. The Arab traveller is interested in the opportunity to see the diverse, grandiose, untouched Russian nature - he has never seen anything like the taiga, northern mountains and seas, or tundra landscapes. At the same time, he wants the usual comfort. Therefore, it is necessary to develop halal hotels and restaurants and introduce female taxi drivers and female guides to accompany Arab travellers on excursions with a focus on Muslim history and certain religious locations.

All these features of Russia's guests are an unconditional growth zone for the tourism market, including the training of specialists in interpreters and cultural studies. The natural, historical, and geographical potential of the country allows us to count on a breakthrough in tourism development shortly.

The influence of Social Media on the customers' choice in Russia

As it has been said before, social networking is a powerful marketing tool. The influence of social media - social networks, travel blogs, and forums - is growing every year. For the hospitality industry, social media is vital too. Constantly interacting with guests and potential customers on Twitter, Instagram or Facebook is a powerful marketing tool. Especially when it comes to interacting with the Millennial generation - the "online" generation. Millennials (Generation Y, Generation Next) are the generation born after 1983. ([Dolot, 2018](#)) These people met the new millennium at a young age and are therefore deeply involved in digital technologies. 83% of today's young adults will book a hotel room if they have seen pictures of it on social media from friends. 73% of millennials research a hotel's social media pages before making a booking. And one in three is unlikely to choose a hotel that is not on social networks or messengers. All of this is according to research by UK-based [Knightsbridge Furniture](#).

Most in the hospitality industry would agree that the key to success is word-of-mouth recommendations, i.e. word of mouth. And social media amplifies the resonance a thousandfold. [Knightsbridge Furniture's research](#) confirms this: 76 per cent of those surveyed would share photos of the hotel they are staying at with friends, family and followers. Hotel guests are more likely to tag a hotel whose profile has an attractive and aesthetically pleasing profile in their social media feeds. ([Travelline](#))

This is what is happening in Russia nowadays: without a possibility to have a target on Instagram and Facebook, companies should attract new customers through profile activity and visualisation. Brand awareness on social networks is a direct path to success, and the more attractive the profile, the more chances there are that active social network users will choose this type of placement for their holiday.

One of the latest trends in the hotel industry is eco-tourism and glamping.

Glamping, short for “glamorous camping,” is just what it sounds like a luxury type of camping. It involves staying in some kind of outdoor accommodation (tents, cabins, yurts, or even treehouses) and enjoying additional services, resort-like amenities, and a variety of activities. Glamping is a viable alternative for adapting domestic tourism in crisis periods.

[\(Pop, Marian-Potra, et al., 2024\)](#)

Because of the present situation in the world, some Russians prefer to travel around the country, seeking out unique experiences rather than well-known destinations and hotels. That is why unique sorts of housing are getting more popular, and the quickest method to do it is through social media.

The top three social media sites people use in Russia are VK, Telegram and Instagram (which is forbidden in Russia, but people still have access to them by using VPN). Below, are some examples of glamping spots in Russia that attract customers’ attention:

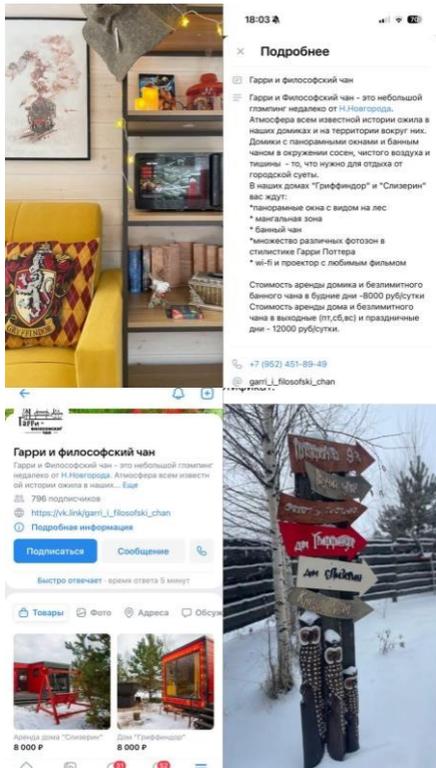
On VK:

The glamping, which is based on the Harry Potter movie, is located close to Nizhny Novgorod.

The design of the glamping plunges its guests into a fairytale film. The accommodation page itself has all the necessary information: cost, actual photos, description of houses, reviews, contacts, and, of course, feedback and reposts from already visited guests. VK allows to target a new audience using paid advertisements, which is an easy way to reach a potential audience.

Advice: the best strategy for managing a profile on Vkontakte is to alternate between different types of content: photos, videos, posts, as well as contests and collaborations. Vkontakte also allows you to officially buy advertising, which will help you attract a potential audience. You can also set up a bot on behalf of the community, which will help automate all the work of a manager: from asking questions from a potential client to making a purchase.

Figure 25: VK profile of glamping in Nizhny Novgorod



Source: vk.com

On Instagram:

The page of a glamping with panoramic windows makes you fall in love with it and book a weekend in one of the lodges literally in a second! Organic subscribers, constant account activity, prompt communication between glamping and clients, beautiful visuals, convenient functionality and much more make the user stay and subscribe to the page and then become a client:

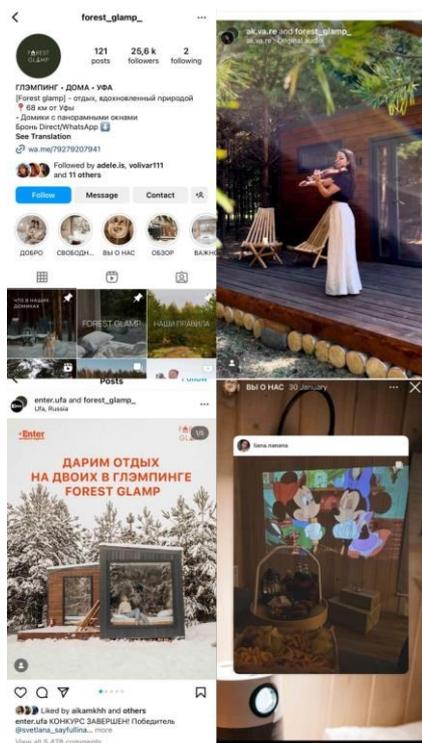
- The description of the profile: highlight the location and catchphrase that makes the brand stand out among similar accommodation facilities. Also, there is a mention how the user can book a place
- The highlights show all the important information, that the customer might require before deciding to book: the available dates for the month, reviews, the houses' overview, prices, the facilities. One of the purposes of the Forest Camp is charitable activity, which they actively participate in. This is highlighted when the glamping site reports that they donate a portion of their profits to various a charitable donation. This also draws prospective clients who wish to assist people in need. This is a vital part of running a business.
- As it was mentioned before, running, and promoting an Instagram profile in Russia is tough nowadays, that is why it is essential to keep your profile active. The Forest

Camp actively collaborates with different accounts and influencers by making different contests, promotions with special codes.

- To sell through the pain. Most glamping tourists are city people looking to get away for the weekend. As a result, it is critical for this firm to demonstrate what it is worth traveling so far for, where the amenities are basic but worthwhile: pure air, cosy eco-houses, isolation, and much more. To effectively represent the ambiance, the accounts use atmosphere visuals and utilize content from individuals who have previously visited them.

Advice: the best strategy for running an Instagram profile is to make different content, alternating between photos, stories, and reels. As advertising is not officially allowed in Russia on this platform, more and more companies are turning to bloggers with similar audiences who would be interested in collaborating with a brand. Collaboration is possible in the form of an advert in their profile, or the blogger can become your ambassador (the type of advert is usually agreed upon before advertising). A free way to promote and attract customers is to create viral videos and publish them in reels. To do this, you need to come up with different ideas and experiment with different formats of video presentation

Figure 26: Instagram profile of glamping in Ufa



Source: Instagram.com

On Telegram:

Telegram is another network that is rapidly growing in popularity. With features like personal and group conversations, channels, and status updates, people are increasingly using it. And it is a terrific tool for a business to stay in touch because of the following reasons:

- Quick response.
- Create a channel where the business can update followers with any relevant information.
- To promote the channel by collaborating with other channels or generating an advertisement with Telegram advertisements.

Telegram is one of the most popular platforms for daily use in Russia, thus more companies are starting to appear there. Kunashir Resort, located in Russia's gorgeous Kuril Islands, serves as an example of a glamping channel on Telegram.

The channel is built like a podcast; therefore the story comes from the channel administrator, who shares numerous postings with followers. The channel itself is created in a cosy approach, without the need for continual booking, which is a common mistake in other channels covering similar topics. The content alternates between valuable information regarding glamping and other topics, fascinating places to visit, numerous surveys, and posts about the island's gastronomy and traditions. The channel description contains all of the most recent information about glamping, such as their website and contact details. Also, Telegram channels offer a function called pinned posts, which allows the administrator to highlight the most essential posts. This channel serves as an auxiliary book for a tourist who is planning a holiday to Kunashir Resort.

Advice: The best strategy for running a Telegram profile is to alternate between different types of content. In channels, you can share just text, photos or videos, polls, or live streams. For sales, you can put a bot in the chat, which will communicate with the customer and simplify and automate the task of booking or communication: in the chat you can set up a menu and fill the menu so that the customer has a minimum number of questions before booking and finally, to lead the person to the next booking by transferring him to the site. To advertise the channel, it is possible either to make collaborations with other social network channels, or to purchase official advertising through Telegram Ads

Figure 2: Telegram channel of glamping resort in Yuzhno-Kurilsk

Conclusion

To conclude this thesis, navigating through the strategic use of social media, with a focus on the B2C hospitality sector, has provided significant insights, particularly for firms in the Russian market. The third chapter, which was geared specifically to the obstacles of the B2C hospitality sector, digs further into the distinct strategies used by enterprises in this industry. The main objective was to better understand the various variables involved in catering to both inbound and domestic tourists, as well as shed light on the difficulty of maintaining a strong social media presence.

The evaluation of the Russian market revealed different characteristics, emphasising the importance of adjusting strategies to the region's unique needs. By focusing on incoming visitors, domestic travellers, and the issues specific to the Russian hospitality landscape, the analysis gave an in-depth understanding of social media interactions in this particular context. Furthermore, the analysis revealed a wide range of techniques for building a significant presence on social media platforms, with a special focus on VK, Telegram, and Instagram. The evaluation of glamping pages on these platforms highlighted innovative methods to engage with the audience, recognising the growing trend and demand for memorable and fulfilling accommodations. This particular focus on glamping not only adds a new dimension to the discoveries, but it also highlights the adaptability and diversity of social media techniques in the hospitality sector as a whole.

In a nutshell, this thesis contributes to the greater understanding of social media in the B2C hospitality sector while also highlighting the challenges and potential opportunities present in the Russian market. The assessment of glamping pages reveals the versatility and creativity required to execute effective social media campaigns in the hospitality business. As businesses navigate the ever-changing landscape of social media, this research serves as a guide for developing strategies that are tailored to the specific characteristics of the Russian market, making it a valuable resource for those looking to establish and strengthen their presence in this constantly evolving sector.

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