ISCTE ⊛ **Business School**
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

CITY MARKETING: ONLINE COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR THE CITY OF LISBON

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Abstract

City Marketing represents marketing efforts of cities in order to attract more visitors. Today, we are confronted everyday with marketing campaigns in all different communication media promoting countries, cities or events. Cities are competing for visitors on a global scale, forcing them to adapt successful marketing strategies for gaining and retaining costumers.

Yet, City Marketing still remains an unknown chapter for a big part of the general public and even for some decision makers in city administration. Bad practices in the past and the improper use of municipal funds originated a negative image of City Marketing and the non-acceptance of this marketing practice by marketers. However, City Marketing is a powerful tool to successfully raise a cities' competitive position and the number of visitors.

This project focuses on online marketing strategies of cities. The Internet changed the way how people buy products and how they consume them. The tourism industry is no exception, being one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy and heavily influenced by online purchase and e-commerce. For the matter of this project, current practices of online marketing and communication will be benchmarked, followed by the creation of an online communication plan for the city of Lisbon.

Keywords: City Marketing, Online Marketing, Tourism Marketing, Online Communications.
JEL Classification: M31 Marketing, M37 Advertising

Sumário

City Marketing representa o marketing aplicado a cidades, tendo como objectivo atrair mais visitantes. Estamos confrontados diariamente com campanhas de marketing em todos os meios de comunicação promovendo países, cidades ou eventos. Cidades estão a competir por visitantes à escala global, o que os obriga a empregar estratégias de marketing para aumentar o seu número de visitantes e conseguir a sua retenção.

Contudo*, City Marketing* continua a ser um assunto mal conhecido por grande parte do público em geral e até para alguns decisores ao nível da administração de cidades. Más práticas no passado e o uso indevido de fundos estruturais causaram uma imagem negativa do *City Marketing* e a sua não-aceitação por lado dos *marketers* como prática comum de marketing. Mas, *City Marketing* é uma ferramenta poderosa para aumentar a posição competitiva de uma cidade e o seu número de visitantes.

Este projecto analisa estratégias de marketing online para cidades. A Internet mudou a maneira como os consumidores compram e consomem produtos, e a indústria do turismo não é excepção. O turismo é um dos sectores mais dinâmicos da economia global e muito influenciada pela compra online. No âmbito deste projecto vai ser efectuado um *benchmark* de práticas actuais de marketing e comunicação online de cidades, seguido da criação de um plano de comunicação online para a cidade de Lisboa.

Executive Summary

Lisbon's economy depends on tourism incomes. Being located in Southern Europe, this is a common characteristic for cities in this region, with tourism being one of the main job creators. Innovation in tourism is a crucial point for cities to develop new ways to increase visitor numbers. Fierce competition among cities requires new approaches to marketing, and Lisbon has to compete for visitors with other cities in Europe and around the globe.

This project was developed by an external element of *Turismo de Lisboa*, the organization responsible for the marketing of the Portuguese capital. The theme of this project is: "City Marketing: Online communication plan for the city of Lisbon".

The main objectives of this project are:

1) Provide an online communication plan to the city of Lisbon
2) Demonstrate benefits of online communication in consumer interaction and retention
3) Contribute to increase the number of Lisbon's visitors (first-time and returning)
4) Alert marketers for the necessity of an online strategy and the inclusion into the strategic marketing plan

The creation of an online communication plan for the city of Lisbon is necessary due to several reasons. The current marketing strategy of Lisbon (TLx14) does not include online marketing or communications in any form. Online marketing represents a fundamental approach of consumer engagement and therefore is indispensable for any marketing strategy. Especially the travel and tourism industry relies strongly on online marketing for their business purposes.

The benefits of online marketing and communications in consumer interaction and retention are undeniable. This project intends to demonstrate these benefits, always adapted to the tourism industry, and act as an incentive for marketing managers to use online marketing in their organizations to increase performances and take advantage of new tools available.

Over the last years Lisbon's tourism numbers are constantly decreasing, as is the medium expenditure per tourist. This project presents new ways for consumer engagement and intents

to contribute to an increase of visitor numbers, being first time or returning visitors. The Internet facilitates especially the exploration of new markets, as no physical presence of tourism managers or campaigns is necessary at target markets. Online marketing will play a key role to revert the negative tendency registered of Lisbon's tourism industry.

Marketers of Lisbon and other cities do know about the importance of online marketing and communications for their businesses. But, by denying a strategic and planned approach to online marketing they diminish the possible effects on visitor numbers. Only the full integration into the cities' marketing plan and the coordination with other marketing areas guarantees the maximum use of benefits.

The project was structured as the following: first, the definition of the problem's context. This chapter will be used to define current problems of Lisbon's tourism industry that are to be solved through this thesis. This is followed by the literature review to identify the most important opinions about city marketing and related fields such as tourism marketing, marketing communications or event tourism. The next chapter embraces the methods and techniques of gathering and analyzing data. It explains how the data used for this project was achieved and which sources were used. The following chapter represents the most important part of the project: the information analysis. This chapter is divided into the external analysis and the internal analysis. The external analysis includes the analysis of the tourism market on European and global scale, as well as the benchmark of the three European cities Copenhagen, Prague and Amsterdam. The benchmark analysis focuses on websites, social networks, email marketing, blogs and mobile marketing. The second part of this chapter is divided into two parts. The first part includes the internal analysis of Lisbon's tourism industry and online communication activities. The second part presents the creation of the online communication plan. The project finishes with the conclusion, references and appendices.

1. Definition of the problem's context

Tourism worldwide suffered a big slowdown since the global economic recession of 2008. The city of Lisbon saw its number of visitors drastically reduced, as well as the medium expenditure per tourist:

Figure 1 – Number of overnight stays in the city of Lisbon, in thousands
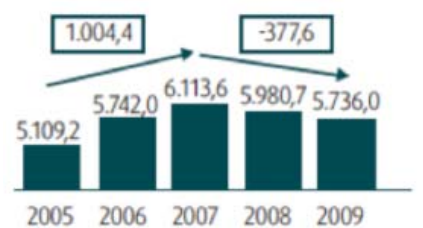
Figure 2 - Daily expenditure per tourist in the city of Lisbon, in thousand €

Source: ATL via TLx14
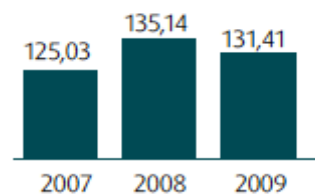
Source: ATL via Tlx14

Tourism represents a major economic income for the Portuguese capital and every effort has to be made to invert this tendency and raise the cities' number of visitors. In 2009, visitor numbers from all countries except Spain decreased significantly, and in some cases like the UK & Ireland even more than 20% (figure 3). These numbers demonstrate the negative tendency registered and represent a major threat for Lisbon's economy.

2010 was a year of recovery and Lisbon experienced a global increase in overnights of 5%, with revenues of 13,6 million Euros (Lisbon's Observatory of Tourism, 2011). Besides this tendency of recuperation, the losses accumulated over the last years are yet to be inverted. Also, Lisbon's recovery was inferior to the global tendency registered of 6,6% (WTO), and recovery from other European capitals was much stronger with increases of more than 10% in cities like Amsterdam, Copenhagen or Madrid (figure 4).

Lisbon suffers due to its remote geographical location inside Europe. The city has less airline connections than other European capitals, representing fewer opportunities to increase visitor numbers. Especially low cost airline traffic does not benefit Lisbon the same way it does other cities, as some companies like Ryanair do not even fly to Lisbon.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Destination Marketing and Destination Image

Destination Marketing characterizes the marketing process for a certain destination. This destination can be a city, a country, a region or just a hotel, representing a valid travel experience for the tourist. The destination image represents the image people have of a certain destination. This image can be influenced by marketing efforts, recommendations or personal experiences as well as be free of any kind of exterior influence, just existing in the mind of a person as an abstract representation of what the destination means to him.

Destination marketing coordinates activities for attracting visitors to a destination. Organizations operating in destination marketing organize tourism promotion and are responsible for visitor numbers (Elbe, 2009). A tourist destination has to be able to attract visitors and meet their needs, independently from the location or size. It has to be attractive, accessible, and available and support services in order to achieve the goals of destination marketing: economic prosperity, employment and regional development (Djurica, 2010).

The success of destination marketing depends on several factors and developing partnerships is a crucial one. By implementing well-organized destination marketing strategies, it is possible to achieve tourism policies for a specific destination and optimize tourism impacts (Buhalis, 2000).

The destination image consists of the affective and the cognitive image. The affective image has more impact on developing the destination image than the cognitive image. Attributes such as the climate, the culture and the people are important aspects of the affective image, while the cognitive image consists of components like safety, accommodation or locations (Yoon, 2005).

The destination image influences travel decisions and travel behavior. Information sources and promotion tools have a big influence on the formation of the destination image. All touch points between the tourist and the destination influence the tourists' perceptions including travel agents, hotels and local people (Molina, 2010).

Di Marino (2009) distinguishes three types of perceptions of a destination:

1. Perception "a priori", the mental construction an individual makes of a place without having a physical connection with it
2. Perception "in situ", a key moment in the tourists' experience because it contrasts with what they have imagined.
3. Perception "a posteriori" indicates that the tourists' experience doesn't end with the trip as they consume some elements of it in their daily life.

Stabler (1988) developed a framework to explain the formation of the destination image. He considers different factors like perceptions, experiences and education and separates between demand and supply factors for influencing the destination image:

Figure 5 - Factors influencing the formation of the destination image
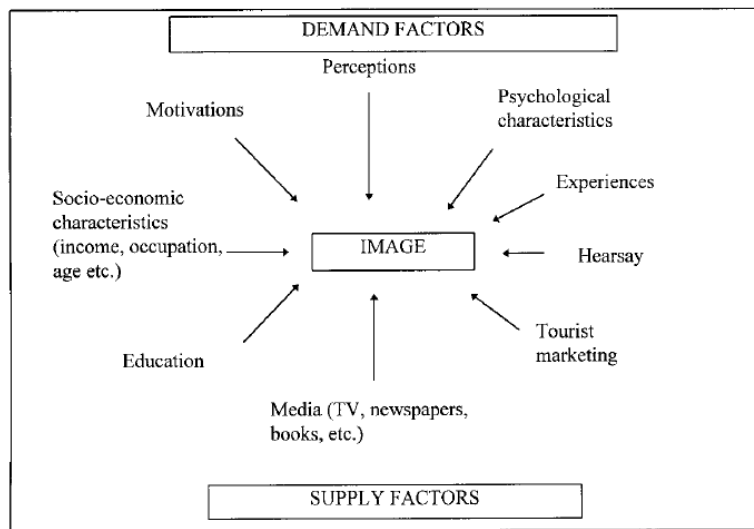
Source: Stabler (1998)

2.2 City Marketing and City Branding

City Marketing is marketing applied to cities. It differs from traditional product marketing in targets and objectives by trying to offer the best travel experience possible to the visitor. City Marketing is about managing the real aspects of the city as well as the unreal values such as the image, perceptions and the notoriety (Boisen, 2008). The idea of branding consists in

making a product or service more valuable than it actually is by connecting it to a well-known name. A city brand has different functionalities and provides extra value. It helps the city to gain notoriety and establish itself in the market, expressing its distinctive characteristics.

Cities make use of marketing to gain more attention and awareness, especially of their offerings, so they can attract more visitors and benefit from the growth. Therefore, City Marketing is also a tool of economic development with different targets such as students, workers, migrants or investments (figure 6) (Clark, 2006).

The good produced by City Marketing is the image of the city, representing the many different realities and characteristics. The different goals of City Marketing include improving the image and the identity of a city, attract investments, raising the competitive position and the differentiation from other cities. City Marketing is a long-term process that cannot be implemented in parts or on a short-term basis, requiring commitment and strategic planning (Karavatzis, 2008).

The traditional marketing mix of the four P's has to be adapted to this marketing practice with a model of five P's and the following elements: product, price, place (distribution), promotion and people. The product is the good and the producer is the city. Each city has different products to offer. Prices are different goods like accommodation, transportation or museums, while the place is the distribution channel where the service is promoted and finally sold. Besides of the existence of professional managers, the influence and contributions of citizens in City Marketing is of vital importance and represents the fifth p, people (Metaxas, 2002).

Strategies in City Marketing rely on resources, knowledge, relations and networking instead of the traditional product orientation. The city marketing process depends on the consumer and the marketing strategy applied. The consumer has different characteristics, needs and wants that have to be satisfied. City Marketing management is about the selection of concepts and tools to satisfy those needs. The consumer evaluates the marketing approach, influenced by its own characteristics and information processing process. In order to develop a positive opinion, he has to perceive the added value offered by the marketing strategy (Braun, 2008).

Figure 7 - City Marketing Process
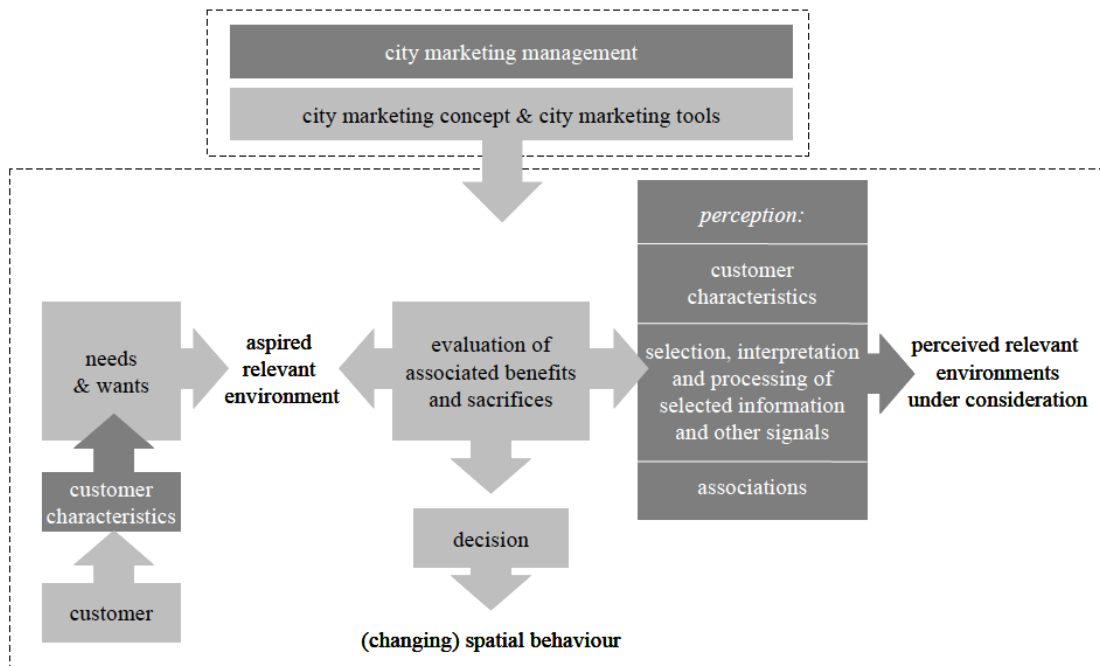
Source: Braun (2008)

The relationship between a city and external publics is based on attraction, trying to make them come to the city. The relation with internal costumers relies on satisfaction, trying to satisfy the resident's needs. As a result can be defined two types of marketing strategies for cities: an external strategy for external costumers based on attraction and an internal strategy for internal costumers based on satisfaction. The publics of each strategy also diverge. Internal costumers are citizens, workers and companies already existing in the area. External customers are non-resident citizens, companies not yet present in the area, business visitors and leisure tourists (Ancarani, 2001).

Kotler (2002) defines four different markets for cities:

1. Visitors, business and non business
2. Residents and workers
3. Businesses and industry
4. Export markets

He also defines local actors such as mayors or convention bureaus as the major actors in the development of City Marketing strategies and considers competition as the major incentive for cities to adopt marketing strategies.

The error of many decision makers in city administration is thinking of City Marketing as a simple promotion tool. Competition among territories is fiercer because of the improvement in transports, communications and infrastructures that has produced a market of cities competing against each other by using City Marketing strategies. The responsibility of City Marketing is shared between municipal departments concerned with tourism promotion, economic development and strategic planning (Seisdedos, 2006).

Figure 8 - Government areas responsible for City Marketing
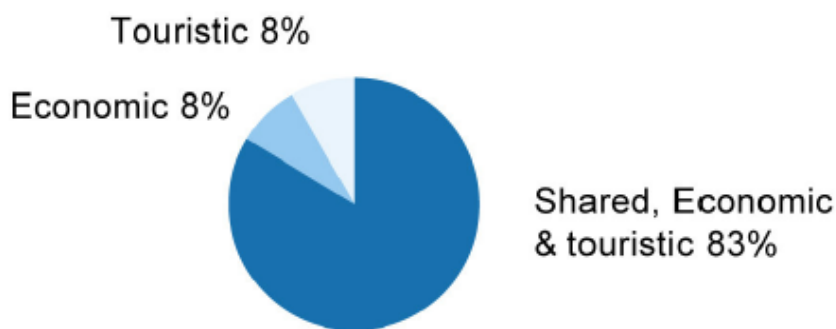
Source: Seisdedos (2006)

The city brand is a multidimensional construct with multiple aspects. It is originated from the physical and social environment of a city and has to be integrated in planning, infrastructure development and landscape design. When building the city brand it is necessary to be aware of the internal culture, local communities, synergies, infrastructures, companies and communications present in the city (Karavatzis, 2008).

The main objectives of city branding are increasing the attractiveness of a city and making people aware of the location. Identity building is of major importance, as well as strategic alliances with other locations. For this, the city's name can act as an umbrella brand, with surrounding towns and regions being integrated and benefiting from it. Branding is a long-term process and all elements of the city like inhabitants or images of the businesses located

in the region define the image (Rainisto, 2003).

City branding is a tool of achieving competitive advantages in order to raise foreign direct investments and tourism, develop local communities and strengthen the citizens' sense of identification. Perceptions and people's images of the city are used to create the brand personality. The brand incorporates the perception of quality and values, as well as brand associations and feelings. In order for a city to distinguish itself from others it needs a unique brand identity so it can be recognized and perceived in the minds of consumers as possessing superior qualities over their competitors (Kavaratzis, 2004).

Cities incorporate different qualities including the appearance, people's experiences of the city, people's belief in the city, what it stands for and what kind of people inhabit the city. In order to attract people from other locations, the city has to offer attractive employment, not be unduly expensive, provide affordable housing, reasonable public transportation, good schools, and recreational attractions and have a reasonable climate. A brand works for a city how these qualities are communicated: by word of- mouth, public relations or advertising (Winfield-Pfefferkorn, 2005).

2.3 Marketing Communications

Marketing Communications are the most visible component of the marketing process. It represents the part where the defined marketing strategy is put into action and communicated to the selected target. The communication mix is a mix of different media available like advertising, sales force, public relations or sponsorships in order communicate. Marketing communications represent the process of an organization using these methods, media and channels in order to communicate with targets outside of the organization. In order to be efficient, marketing communications have to be implemented as a long-term process in a coordinated and centralized way (Owen & Humphrey, 2009).

Marketing communications can be divided into two parts. The first one can be called costumer intelligence and is concerned with gathering data, understanding the consumers' needs and interests in order to use this information in the marketing process. The other part represents the actual communication process and is about providing information about a product and/or organization (Varey, 2002).

Fill (2002: 28) defines marketing communications like this: „Marketing communication is one of the elements of the marketing mix and is responsible for putting the marketing offer to the target market. It is the planned and integrated communication activity that communicates with an organization's stakeholders".

2.4 City Products

2.4.1 City Breaks

City Breaks are short time travels to cities with the objective to get to know the culture, history and the people. They are a relatively new occurrence in the tourism industry and in Europe they benefited from the growing importance of low cost airlines since the early 1990's.

City Breaks are leisure trips involving travel, accommodation and spending at the city in opposition to visiting friends and relations, which often involves no commercial accommodation. The main characteristics of city breaks include the short duration of the stay, normally between one and three nights, and the fact that most visitors tend to come from nearby source markets. Also, the date flexibility, with City Break travel existing throughout the year, and the secondary nature of the trips, normally taken as an additional trip to a series of holiday activities. At last, the small number of travel parties typical for City Break travel, mostly without children, being couples or singles trying to break away. City Breaks differ from other forms of holidays, as they are "city only" holidays. City Breaks are active holidays with people getting involved, not directly with relax or regeneration motives (Dunne, 2007, 2009).

2.4.2   Cultural Tourism

Cultural Tourism and City Tourism are two much related areas of the tourism industry. Most of the cities' attractions are cultural landmarks, and the proper marketing and promotion of those landmarks represent an essential part of the cities' potential to attract new visitors. Cultural tourism is a form of actively promoting culture as a form of tourism and can be used for museums or architecture as well as for festivals or traditional rituals.

Culture is a vital component of urban tourism and city tourism, especially in southern European countries. Cities are competing for tourists and visitors and culture has become an asset worth disputing the changes. Therefore, cities undertake more initiatives to understand the cultural motivations of visitors and non-visitors (Van der Ark, 2006)

Cultural Tourism is a form of travelling to explore the cultural environment of a place, country or city, and can be such diverse as arts, food, lifestyles or events, always focusing the exchange of cultures. It has a positive economic and social impact and contributes to the formation of a city. As a result, culture acts as an instrument that enables understatement between people and brings new aspects to tourism (UNESCO, 2003).

In cities, cultural tourism involves the cultural sector and tourism, and both have to combine objectives and strategies in order to succeed. Most studies warn about the demographic development in Europe towards an older society but cultural tourism can actually benefit from this fact and attract more visitors (European Travel Commission, 2005).

2.4.3 Sports Tourism

Sports Tourism is a constantly growing and interesting field of marketing and tourism. The active travelling for visiting and participating in sport events is connected to the infrastructures available as well as to the nature of the event. Cities can only benefit from hosting sport events. It is vital to promote and market sport events in a proper manner. Events like the FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games, but also national and regional competitions area a good way to receive new visitors and extra cash flows.

Sport is a significant travel activity, independently of the primary or secondary nature. It influences many travel decisions and complements the travel experience (Hinch, 2001). Cities host sport events for entertainment purposes, to enhance community pride and to stimulate spending. The successful management of sport initiatives can result in the higher use of a destination's attractions, resources, and services (Daniels, 2006).

Cities benefit economically and socially from holding events, but effects can also be negative if the event is not appropriate to the size or structure of the city. Event visitors have different motivations for their visits such as seeing the actual sport or the feeling of being part of the

event. There has to exist a positive correlation between the destination, the infrastructure and the sport event in order to give importance to local participants and spectators, as they contribute to the image of the event (figure 9). The main benefits of sport events are on a long-term basis, as the attractiveness of the city will rise (Bieger, 2003)

2.4.4   MICE

MICE tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Congresses, and Events) is a particular form of tourism. It differs from other forms of tourism as it has strictly business purposes, offering organizations and entrepreneurs opportunities to present themselves, their businesses or new ideas.

Globalization had a significant impact on the MICE sector and is responsible for the industry's dramatic growth in both size and frequency of international meetings. At the same time it originated new challenges in form of more intense competition, causing shorter and more business focused dialogues and preference for short time travels (De Lara, 2008). The Internet and online environments changed the MICE sector and helped to improve MICE performance and local development (Lau, 2005).

Events are an important motivator of tourism that causes growth. The purpose of holding events is community building, urban renewal, cultural development and fostering national identities. There are three general types of events: business events, sport events and festivals. Event tourism is the combination of tourism management and event management, with both being fields of study themselves (Getz, 2007):

Figure 10 - Tourism and Event management
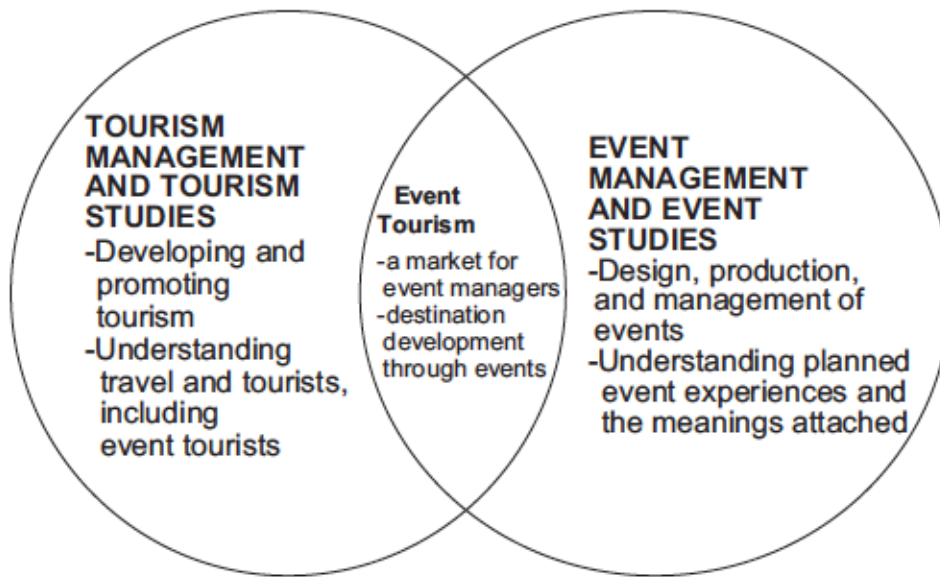
Source: Getz (2007)

Jago (1997) considers 5 different types of events regarding the event frequency and size:

- Mega Event - Only occurs one time, with an international focus.

- Special Event - Occurs only once or rarely, provides a unique experience.

- Major Event - Repeats more often, requires funds and logistics, attracts large crowds and media attention.

- Hallmark Event - Infrequently occurring but always associated to a specific place, which is part of the event.

- Festival–Regular event. A theme is celebrated by these events.

3. Methods and techniques of gathering and analyzing data

This project studies online communication strategies and in which they contribute to achieve marketing goals. The focus on online communication indicates directly the source of most information and data: online. The Internet presence of cities and the mix of online communication media are key factors for this analysis.

This project is a qualitative study and data collection was realized through secondary data of national and international information sources such as books, scientific articles and journals, travel magazines, websites, blogs, forums, social networks, the YouTube video channel, newsletters and mobile marketing campaigns. The goal was to gain maximum information possible about the cities' online existence in order to evaluate the options taken.

General information about the tourism and travel industry was achieved by information of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the European Travel Commission (ETC).

Information about the benchmarked cities was taken from their respective activity reports and online communication data such as official websites, social networks and other digital channel of Copenhagen, Prague and Amsterdam. Specific information about each country's tourism and marketing statistics was found in the countries' statistical bureaus, journals of tourism and marketing and promotional materials.

General tourism and marketing information about the city of Lisbon was taken from Lisbon's marketing strategy TLx14, the National Strategic Plan for *Turismo de Portugal* PENT, Statistics Portugal (INE), *Turismo de Lisboa* and the website www.visitlisboa.com.

4. Information analysis and conclusions

In the first part of this chapter will be analyzed the European and international tourism, travel and online marketing market. This is followed by an analysis of online communication activities of three different cities, a comparison of all strategies, conclusions and recommendations. To represent the European reality of online City Marketing, only European cities and their strategies are referenced. They represent four different areas of Europe and are comparable in terms of size and population: Copenhagen, Denmark's capital for northern Europe, Prague, the Czech's Republic capital for eastern Europe, Amsterdam, the Netherland's capital for central Europe and Lisbon, Portugal's capital for southern Europe. In the second part will be analyzed the current marketing and online communication activities of the city of Lisbon and finally created the online communication plan.

4.1 External analysis

The tourism industry is one of the most important business sectors of the global economy. In 2010, international tourism receipts reached 693 billion Euros worldwide, back from 610 billion Euros in 2009, corresponding to an increase of 4.7%. Worldwide, international tourism grew strongly, with an increase of 6.6% in international tourist arrivals over 2009, up to 940 million tourists (World Tourism Organization: 2011). 235 million people are estimated to work in the tourism industry, representing more than 8% of global employment and 9% of the global GDP (WTTC: 2010).

Over the last decades, cities in Europe experienced a constant increase of visitors and incomes from tourism. Tourism today produces 10% of the European Unions' Gross Domestic Product, with tourism receipts of 296,1 billion Euros in 2009 and 459,7 million arrivals. In 2009, Europe's share of international tourism arrivals worldwide was 52,2 % and six of the world's top ten tourism destinations are located on the European continent. The tourism industry in Europe is divided in about 1.8 million small businesses, employing 9,7 million people, approximately 5,2% of the total workforce of the EU (European Travel Commission: 2010). Low cost airlines are responsible for an increase of tourism travel by offering cost reduced flights:

Figure 11 - Market share of low cost airlines in Europe, in percentage
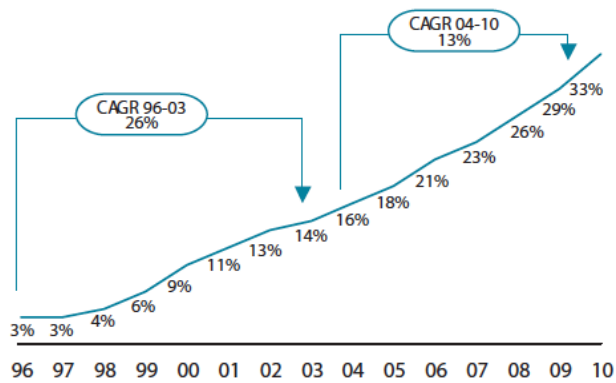
Sources: ECA; AENA; IET viaPENT (2007)

At the same time, e-commerce and online purchase of flights and accommodations facilitated the buying process. The Internet is an accessible medium for most Europeans (table 1), making those features available for the general public. Travel trends like City Breaks help tourism to fight seasonality and receive tourists all year long, making it a year around sustainable economic sector.

Online marketing represents marketing in online environments. During the last years the growth of expenditures in online marketing of European countries was significant (table 2), and for 2012 expenditures are estimated to reach 16 billion Euros. Cities and countries do already use a considerable part of their marketing budget for online marketing:

Figure 12 – Percentage of Online of Total Ad Spend in European countries, 2010
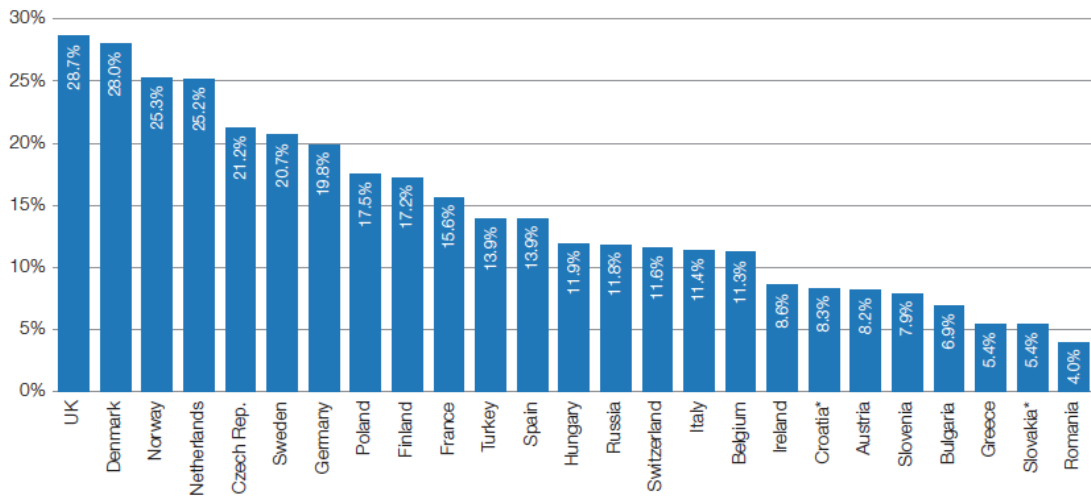
Source: IAB Europe/Warc

Today, online advertising has higher growth rates than any other type of advertising (figure 13). This reality affected particularly the tourism industry. Most of the traditional services offered by travel agents, hotels or other travel intermediates are nowadays sold over the Internet and with more success than offline.

Figure 14–European online travel market, in billion €
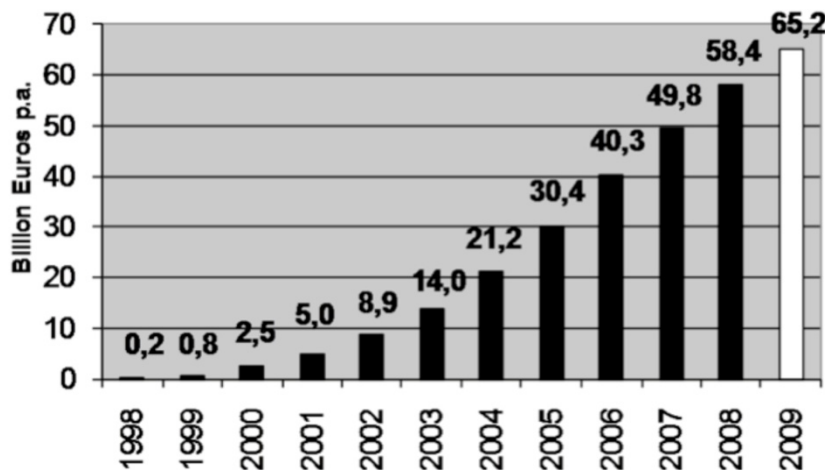
Source: Marcussen (2009)

While the Internet makes it easier to interact and provoke desired actions by consumers, it also facilitates the process of evaluation and measuring the success of marketing campaigns. Numbers can be consulted in real time and during the whole process.

Today and in the future, marketers will find a particular challenge in targeting their audience due to anatomization of the media caused by the Internet. People nowadays do not trust television, advertising or Public Relations the same way they used to and prefer real opinions from consumers like them, available on the Internet. Product reviews and consumer-generated content already represent a major information source for today's consuming society. In the tourism industry, trip advisors and travel forums inform precisely about every travel experience of users and fellow travelers by describing all aspects of the destination and forming a real opinion, positive or negative. The trust in consumer-generated content made the Internet a primary information source for travel planning, also due to the possibility of consulting information and buying the products/services at the same time.

The world of social networks and digital interrelations changed how people communicate and their consuming behavior. These changes make it crucial for enterprises to understand social

changes and people's desires in order to respond in an adequate manner. Web 2.0 changed the Internet and made it a participative platform instead of a simple information source, a vital and interactive network that encourages participation and uploads by users. Social Networks have a big influence on changes in day-to-day life. They represent the primary online platform for people to express themselves and their opinions and the network effect makes it a powerful communication source and media. During the last years, social network user rates grew immense, hitting impressive numbers:

Figure 15 – Top 10 Social Networks June 2011, by unique visitors, in million
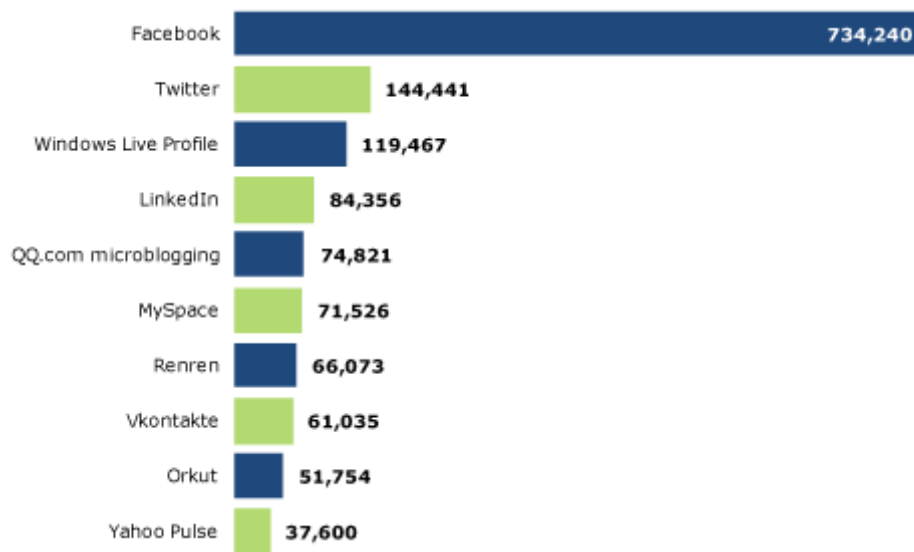
Source: ComScore (2011) via Marketingcharts.com

 4.2 Benchmark

The cities that will be subjects of benchmarking are Copenhagen, Prague and Amsterdam. The analysis will explore their online strategies and evaluate the cities under the following criteria: websites, social networks, email marketing, blogs, mobile marketing, forums and online advertising. The selected criteria are the most important elements of any online marketing strategy and therefore represent key tools for marketing and communication in online environments. None of the three selected cities integrated email marketing, forums or online advertising in their online strategies.

Table 3 – Criteria for evaluation of online strategies

	Website	Social Networks	Email Marketing	Blog	Mobile Marketing	Forum	Online advertising
Copenhagen							
Prague							
Amsterdam							

The benchmarked cities represent direct competitors of Lisbon. They are European capitals of similar dimension and tourism numbers and they partially share the same inbound visitor markets with Lisbon. For Amsterdam, the main visitor markets are the UK, Germany, France, Spain and the United States. For Copenhagen it is Germany, Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands and for Prague it is Germany, the UK, Italy, the United States and Russia (City of Amsterdam 2010, Statistics Denmark 2011, Praguewelcome). At the same time, they represent four different areas of Europe, namely northern, central, eastern and southern/western Europe. This choice guarantees the faithful representation of the reality of online marketing and communications in all Europe and permits the comparison of different realities.

4.2.1 Copenhagen

Copenhagen is the capital of Denmark and the countries' largest city. It has a population of approximately 1,2 million, with the metropolitan area being home to nearly 2 million habitants.[1] Copenhagen is one of the safest cities in the world with a very high quality of life. In 2007, the city was ranked 11th in the world for cities with the best quality of life[2]. In recent years the city gained a reputation for its architecture, design and gourmet scene. In 2005, 2008, 2010 and 2011 Copenhagen was awarded Europe's leading cruise port by the World Travel Awards and in 2010 the city was also awarded Europe's leading Cruise Destination[3], representing the excellent conditions for cruise travel in the Danish capital.

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[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copenhagen
[2] http://www.businessweek.com/interactive_reports/livable_cities_worldwide.html
[3] http://www.worldtravelawards.com/award-europes-leading-cruise-port-2011

Tourism

After a significant slowdown in 2009, 2010 was again a year of growth for Copenhagen's tourism industry with almost 5 million overnight stays (Lisbon's observatory of Tourism, 2011). Current revenues from tourism in the Copenhagen region lie at around 34 million Euros annually (www.visitcopenhagen.com).

City marketing

The entity responsible for City Marketing of Copenhagen is Wonderful Copenhagen. It is the municipal tourism info agency, acting as initiator of the web project visitcopenhagen.com and the creator of the brand "cOPENhagen". Wonderful Copenhagen is a foundation, sustained by businesses and the government, aiming to promote the city of Copenhagen and develop business. Established in 1992, it originally focused only on leisure tourism. Today, services include business tourism, cruise tourism, MICE and sports marketing.

Figure 16 - Visual identity of Wonderful Copenhagen

Wonderful Copenhagen created the brand "cOPENhagen" to promote Denmark's capital. The visual identity includes the slogan: *Open for you*. The brand stands for the openness of the city and its people to welcome outsiders and letting them discover and enjoy their city.

Figure 17 - Visual identity of the brand "cOPENhagen"

Online City Marketing

The city of Copenhagen uses online marketing in several ways. The online strategy is well developed and put into action through a website (www.visitcopenhagen.com), social networks, an own YouTube channel and an I-phone app.

Website

The website www.visitcopenhagen.com offers a lot of information segmented into different targets: Visit, Living, Cruise, Meetings, Investing, Travel trade and Media (figure 18). The general appearance of the site changes according to the content and segments displayed. This feature helps to separate information and gives the portal a modern, clean look.

Figure 19 – Different visual appearances of the website www.visitcopenhagen.com
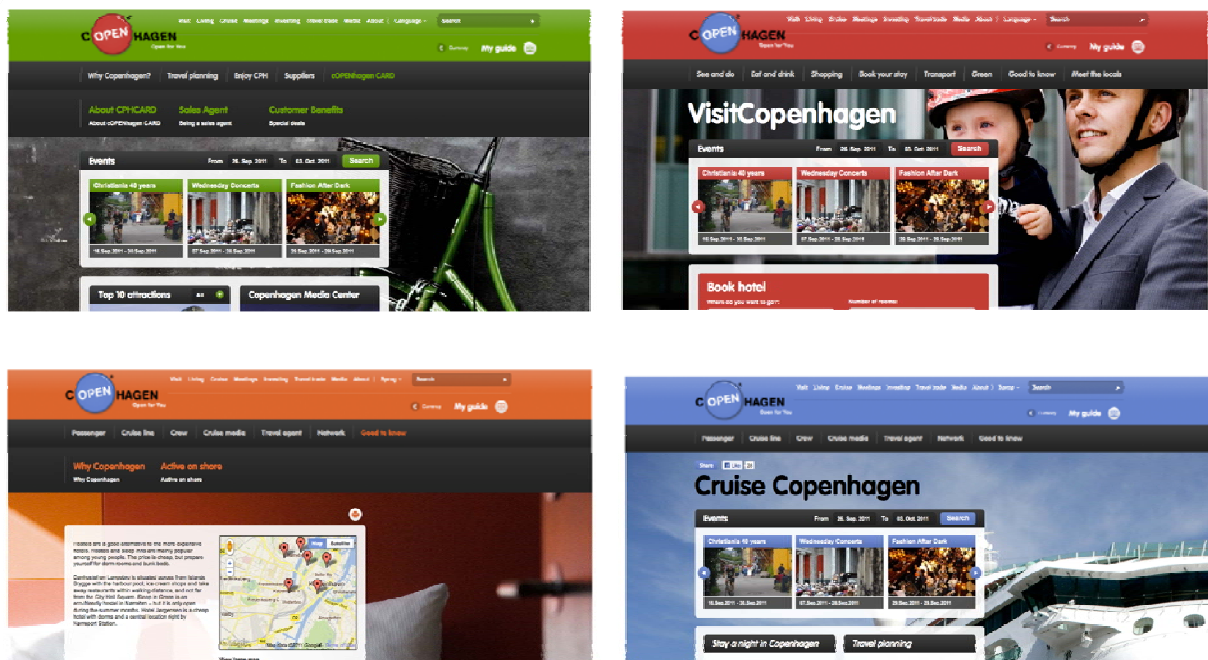
The visual identity of the brand "c OPEN hagen" also appears in different forms throughout the website, always adapted to the specific target (figure 20). The existing segments on the website were chosen in accordance with the main targets of the city: leisure tourists visiting

Copenhagen on holidays, representing the biggest part of visitor numbers, people who live or want to live in Copenhagen, people who come to Copenhagen on cruise liners, people who come to Copenhagen on business, investors and the media. The site is available in five different languages, targeting the five main visitor markets: Danish, German, English, Norwegian and Swedish. The content available is very diverse and tries to appeal to as many visitors as possible. The website offers the possibility to book hotels, making it of commercial purpose.

The unique feature of the website is the possibility to create your own online guide. This feature enables you to select and preserve the content of the site you like the most. The content is imported to a virtual guide that later on can be saved as a PDF document or stored on mobile devices (figure 21). The My Guide section is a perfect example for personalization of contents and filtering of personalized information, a recent trend with people being able to create their own entertainment and in control about information consumed.

Social networks

Facebook represents an important online communication channel for Copenhagen's online marketing strategy. More than 18.000 likes and 5.000 check-ups are a sign of vital interaction between the city and social media users. Daily updates and interaction with costumers confirm this fact. Facebook is used to communicate upcoming events and news of the site, but also every kind of occurrence in, around and about Copenhagen. Users interact directly with the marketers of Copenhagen's online marketing team. On the website www.visitcopenhagen.com the share button appears on every page, encouraging the use of Facebook to share the site's content (figure 22).

Twitter is less used for online communication by Wonderful Copenhagen, as it lacks the popularity of Facebook in Europe and around the world (figure 15). Copenhagen's online marketers used Twitter to communicate city related issues and the Twitter account had more than 1.300 followers and 700 tweets (figure 23). However, the online marketing team of Wonderful Copenhagen decided to suspend Twitter activities and deactivate the account, as results achieved was not as expected.

The YouTube channel of Visit Copenhagen is a differential factor for online marketing and communication that Copenhagen's online marketers developed. 87 different videos about the city, the history, the people or guided tours leave the visitor with a vital experience of Copenhagen. The YouTube channel was already seen more than 45.000 times and counts on 450 subscribers, both considerable numbers in terms of YouTube (Figure 24).

Blog

Visitcopenhagen.com uses internal blogs to introduce the visitor to the world of Copenhagen locals and their daily lives. It is a nice feature for people to experience the lives of some Copenhageners and get inside tips. Four different locals were chosen to write about their daily experiences and impressions in Denmark's capital explaining the Danish culture and approximate outsiders to Copenhagen's culture, cuisine and fashion scene. (Figure 25)

Mobile marketing

The iPhone app of Visitcopenhagen.com is a feature for customization of mobile content. It is an online city guide that enables users to access information about Copenhagen from their iPhones. They can check events, maps and general travel information, facts about attractions or locations and buy tickets for museums or events. It is a nice complementary feature for users to get instant access while being in Copenhagen, and it is for free.

Figure 26 - iPhone app of visitcopenhagen.com

4.2.2   Prague

Prague is the capital of the Czech Republic capital and the largest city. It has a population of approximately 1.3 million people and a metropolitan area of nearly 2.3 million.[4] Situated on the banks of the Vltava River, Prague exists for more than 1.100 years and has been an important political, cultural and economic centre for Europe since the middle Ages. In 1992, the UNESCO declared Prague's historic centre World Heritage.[5]

Tourism

Prague is a very popular tourist destination in Europe and in 2010 the city received more than nine million overnight stays (Lisbon's observatory of tourism, 2011). The city offers a big number of well-known attractions with the most famous ones being Charles Bridge, the Prague Castle and the Old Town Square.

City marketing

The Prague Information Service is responsible for the City Marketing of Prague. Founded in 1958 as an independent information organization, the organizations' leading goal is to promote the city nationally and internationally for tourism and businesses worldwide and inhabitants of Prague. The Prague Information Service distributes several publications online and offline for visitors and inhabitants of Prague.

Figure 27 - Visual identity of the Prague Information Service

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[4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prague
[5] http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/616

Online City Marketing

Prague's online marketing team created their online marketing strategy by developing two different portals: http://www.praguewelcome.cz/en/ is the official online tourism portal, mostly directed to foreign visitors, while http://www.praha.eu/jnp/en/home/index.html is the online portal of the city administration and primarily directed to the habitants of Prague. For the objectives of this project we will analyze http://www.praguewelcome.cz/en/as it represents the portal for marketing and promotion of the city. The online marketing strategy for the city of Prague includes the website http://www.praguewelcome.cz/en/, social networks and an own YouTube channel.

Website

The official online tourism portal of Prague is http://www.praguewelcome.cz/en/. It's an online marketing project of the authority of the City of Prague. The website has a modern and appealing look and reunites important information, categorized as the following: Information, Guidebook, Activities, Services and About us. (figure 28). The INFOCENTRE B2B represents an extra category, directed to organizations and individuals of the business sector. The website is available in nine different languages: Czech, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Japanese and Chinese.

Figure 29 - Visual identity of praguewelcome.cz

The portal is mostly directed to leisure visitors and offers information about monuments, news, events or maps of the city. It is possible to book stays in hotels via the website, which makes it of commercial purpose. The services category is only of commercial intentions presenting hotels, restaurants and information about transportations of Prague, as well as the general reservation page.

The INFOCENTRE B2B is directed to organizations and individuals doing business in Prague, representing the MICE sector of the Czech Republic's capital. The INFOCENTRE

offers an event guide for meetings, a congress and convention calendar, information about MICE facilities in Prague, a list of MICE enterprises and the media centre. It presents important information for professionals of the MICE sector about possibilities and capacities in the Czech's Republic capital. This outlines the importance of the MICE sector for the city of Prague. Day-trip recommendations are an important feature for City Break visitors. Praguewelcome.cz offers a whole section for this segment, displaying trip recommendations for short term visits to Prague. The section is divided into 1-day, 2-day and 3-day trip recommendations (figure 30). These trips represent City Break travels, as they are always of short duration, mostly over the weekend.

The Guidebook is the differential feature of the online portal. It offers the possibility to create your own interenary for planning stays in Prague. (http://www.praguewelcome.cz/en/guidebook/interactive-guide.shtml). Trips of up to 5 days can be planned by car or walking through the city. The guidebook offers a list of all of Prague's monuments and the approximate time of visit of each one of them. Then, divided into the number of days, you can plan your stay by virtually adding the monuments to time references and schedule your days. The exact location of the monuments is represented on an interactive map, so you can geographically locate yourself and plan your days with time and place references. At the end will appear,in chronological order, the total visiting time including thetime necessary for relocation from one monument to another.

Figure 31 – Guidebook of praguewelcome.cz
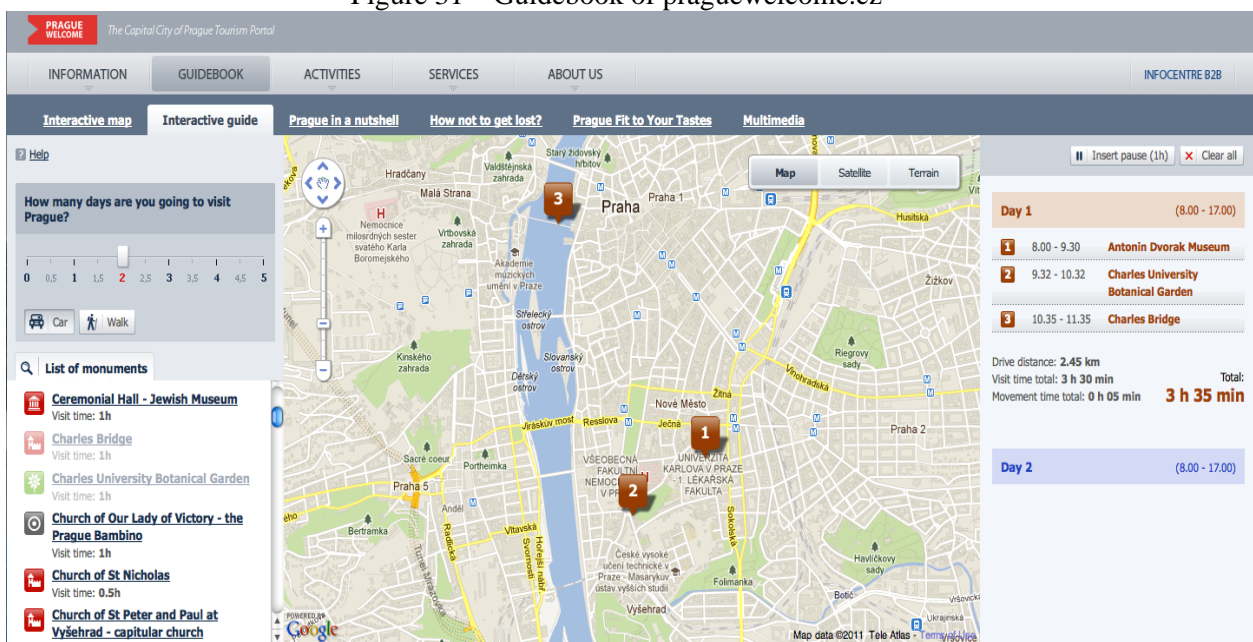
Social Networks

Facebook is the most used online communication channel by the Prague Information Service. The page has nearly 550 likes and the online marketing team updates the page normally between two and three times a week. Most of the posts are about events taking place in Prague and surroundings, displaying photos or videos of the city (figure 32). Customer interaction is guaranteed with online marketers responding to posts.

Twitter represents a less used online communication media by praguewelcome.cz, having 59 followers and 24 tweets. It confirms the tendency of lesser usage of this social network by European users. The online marketing team of the Prague Information Service did not deactivate the account like Visit Copenhagen but just stopped using this communication channel because of lack of success.

Figure 33 - Twitter page of praguewelcome.cz
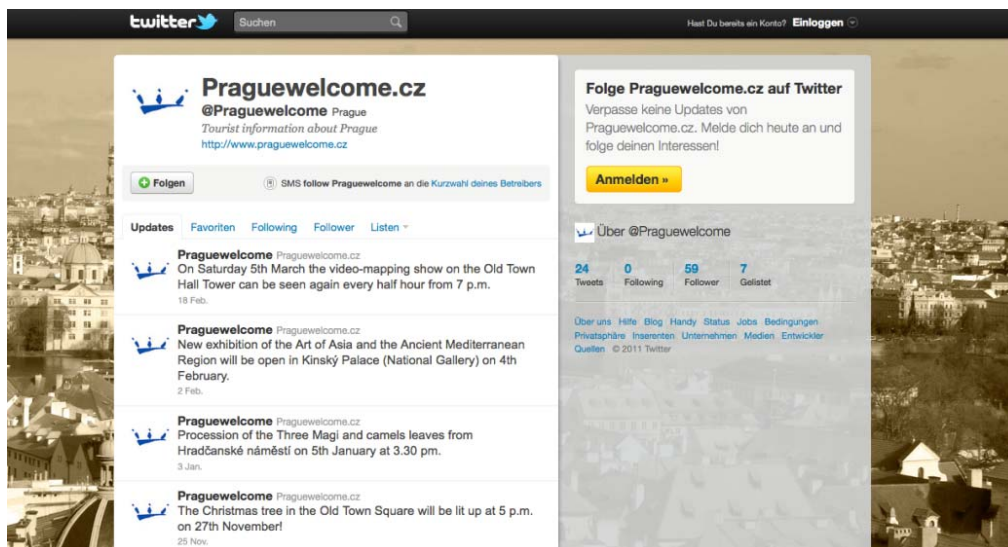
The YouTube channel of praguewelcome.cz has only four uploads and 15 subscribers. In total numbers, the channel and all its videos were only seen 3.200 times (figure 34). These numbers are a clear fact for the denial of You Tube as an online communication channel by the Prague Information service and lack of exploration of the mediums' possibilities.

4.2.3   Amsterdam

Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands' and its largest city. It has a population of approximately 780.000 and a metropolitan area of 2.1 million people[6]. In 2007, the city was ranked 13th in the world for cities with the best quality of life[7]. Amsterdam is worldwide renowned for its liberal lifestyle, especially the legalization of Marihuana and the red light district, but also for being a vibrant city in the heart of Europe. Amsterdam is an excellent city for events, congresses and making business, as are examples international events like the The International Broadcasting Convention, Sail Amsterdam or the Amsterdam International Fashion Week.

Tourism

In 2009, Amsterdam had nearly 8,5 million overnight stays, being one of Europe's most visited cities (Lisbon's observatory of Tourism, 2011). The main visitor markets for tourism in Amsterdam are the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy and the USA. In 2010, 49.400 people were working in the tourism industry in Amsterdam (City of Amsterdam: 2010).

City marketing

Amsterdam is a pioneer in the domain of City Marketing due to extensive research, innovation, publications and co-operations with universities, private and public entities. It was one of the first cities in Europe that actively tried to attract visitors by using marketing techniques.

The organization responsible for City Marketing in Amsterdam is Amsterdam Partners. It was founded in 2004 as a joint venture between public and private entities to act as a platform for the government, the industry and marketing organizations. The main goal is to promote and improve the image of Amsterdam on national and international level for business people, leisure tourists and residents. For this purpose was created the brand "Iamsterdam", one of the most powerful city brands in the world and visible throughout the city. The brand represents the city and the people of Amsterdam. Iamsterdam is a wordplay trying to make people

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[6] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amsterdam
[7] http://www.businessweek.com/interactive_reports/livable_cities_worldwide.html

identify themselves with the city, being residents or tourists, by claiming themselves a part of it. Target markets for the marketing strategy are China, India, Japan and Europe. As marketing tools, Amsterdam Partners uses media campaigns, Internet portals and social networks, international festivals, events, merchandising and their own publications.

Figure 35 - Visual identity of Iamsterdam

Online City Marketing

The online marketing strategy picks up on the values of the brand Iamsterdam and transports the visual identification and its values into the online world. Iamsterdam is the central idea behind all online marketing efforts and is visible throughout the project. The online strategy includes the website www.iamsterdam.com, social networks and an iPhone app.

Website

Iamsterdam.com is the official online tourism portal of the city of Amsterdam. It provides information about the city, events and business related issues (figure 36). The main categories are for visitors, residents, businesses and the MICE sector including congresses, meetings and conventions. The website is a co-production of the city of Amsterdam and several of their partners by reuniting information and sharing benefits under the same project. It offers possibilities for hotel booking and advertising, making it clearly of commercial purpose. The website disposes links to social networks, namely Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and offers multimedia content of the city.

The content available on the website was created for residents as well as for tourists, making it not only a medium of tourism promotion but also of value for the people of Amsterdam. Iamsterdam.com is available in 7 languages: English, German, Spanish, French, Dutch, Italian and Japanese.

The category "Visiting" offers information for visitors of Amsterdam and the surrounding areas including museums, attractions, and the history of Amsterdam, tours and excursions. "Living" provides practical information for those planning to move to Amsterdam as well as community news and updates for those already living in the Dutch capital. Topics such as work, public transports, healthcare, finances, education and entertainment are here engaged. "What's on" provides information on exhibitions, concerts and events, while "business" provides information to any organization with plans to invest or to settle in the Amsterdam area, as well as specific information about the MICE sector.

The main differential feature of the website is the Amsterdam MICE manual. It is an online manual disposing all information about the MICE sector in Amsterdam, the meetings industry, hotels and venues in form of an *eBook*, available online and for free.

Figure 37 - Amsterdam MICE manual 2011

Another differential feature of iamsterdam.com is the web shop. Here you can buy promotion material related to Amsterdam from the traditional t-shirts and sweaters to bicycle lights or footballs with the visual identity of iamsterdam.com. It is a nice e-commerce shop allowing

people to show their affection with Amsterdam and helping to spread the brand identity (figure 38).

Social Networks

Facebook is clearly the most used social network and online communication channel by Iamsterdam to communicate with their target. It has an impressive 30.000 likes, daily updates, contests to win trips or tickets, tips about visiting Amsterdam, photos and videos (figure 39). Other Facebook users are allowed to post on the wall, as most posts are actually not from Iamsterdam. Despite the fact that Facebook is an online channel to communicate with other people, Iamsterdam does not interact with other users, only posting updates.

Twitter is not as important as Facebook but still represents an important online medium for Amsterdam Partners. Iamsterdam.com has 231 followers and posted over 1.600 tweets (figure 40), an impressive number having in mind the numbers and situations of other cities. Iamsterdam uses Twitter for their benefits by targeting primary Smartphone users and sharing many tweets with links to the website or Facebook page.

The YouTube channel of Iamsterdam has more than 3.000 channel views and 37.000 total views of all videos, a sign of the high number of visitors. Amsterdam Partners' online marketing team uses the You Tube channel to post videos about the city and its history, as well as actual information about Amsterdam. They even launched several video contests via this medium, also communicated through other social networks and the online portal, for participants to win trips to Amsterdam or money for their stay in the Dutch capital.

Figure 41 - You Tube channel of Iamsterdam
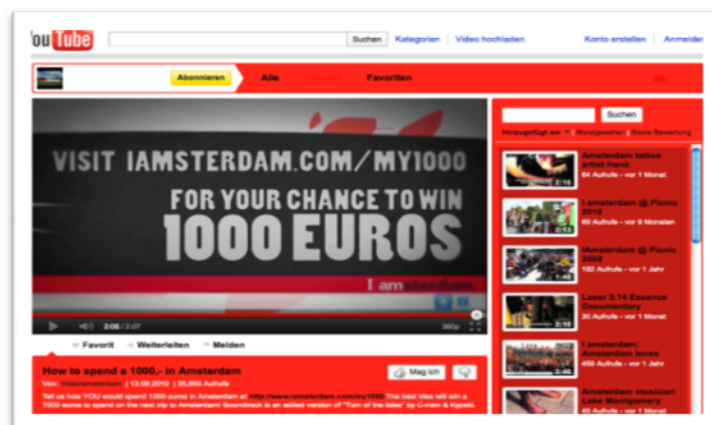
Iamsterdam also offers the Mobile City Guide, an app for iPhone and iPad Touch. It helps visitors of Amsterdam and locals to find restaurants, bars, accommodations, museums and sights. It also indicates locations of free Wi-Fi spots in and around Amsterdam. The event calendar and maps of Amsterdam with all the locations offer multimedia service in real time (figure 42).

Blog

The website offers a series of internal blogs. On them, the "*I ambassadors*", national citizens and foreigners living in Amsterdam, regularly share their experiences about food, music or art in their daily lives in Amsterdam.

Conclusions

Wonderful Copenhagen embraces a rather technological approach to online marketing. The website is very modern and offers a number of technological gadgets like the "MyGuide" section. Also, the different visual identities and the changing aspect of the website make it a modern communication channel in web 2.0 style. The focus on cruise liners and the creation of an own section for this target on the website is a good choice to communicate directly with one of the cities' prime targets. Also, the intensive use of social networks and the iPhone app confirm the tendency of a technological and modern approach to online communication. The online marketing and communication activity of Visit Copenhagen is well succeeded. Visit Copenhagen proposes alternative ways for consumers to inform themselves about the city.

The Prague Tourist Information Service does not practice a coherent approach to online marketing and communication. The website offers important information but management of social networks is very poor, as no social media manager controls the organizations' online relations with external publics. Online communication media are abandoned or not used in a proper manner, missing opportunities of consumer engagement. Prague has to do more in order get full advantage out of online marketing and not just spreading information via its website. Even the visual identity is confusing and does not express values of the city or the habitants.

Amsterdam is a successful city in terms of online marketing and communications. The brand Iamsterdam is powerful and easy to understand, communicating important values. The

website is well developed, keeping it simple by offering the most important information segmented in a logical and understandable way. Also, social networks show impressive numbers of visitors and users, a clear sign that Iamsterdam uses them for their benefits and with success. Amsterdam created a real balance between traditional and technological features of online marketing and direct interaction. The only negative aspect to point out is the missing interaction between social media managers and costumers, making it necessary to start interaction in order to build relations via social networks.

Table 4 - Comparison of benchmarked cities

	Annual Tourists	Brand	Online Strategy	Website	Differential Feature	Social Networks
Copenhagen	4,7 million	Modern, open, adapted to different targets and directed to visitors	Abundant and technology focused	Modern look, much information, technological gadgets	MyGuide	• 18.000 Facebook likes • 1.300 Twitter followers • 87 You Tube videos, 48.000 channel views, 450 subscribers
Prague	9 million	Poor, without a meaning	Few elements, not coherent	Basic, content not segmented, only for tourism promotion	Guidebook	• 550 Facebook likes • 59 Twitter followers • 4 YouTube videos, 3.400 channel views, 15 subscribers
Amsterdam	8,4 million	Strong, direct, easy to understand, directed to habitants and visitors	Abundant and consumer focused	Simple but effective, much information, well segmented	MICE manual 2011, Web shop	• 30.000 Facebook likes • 231 Twitter followers • 23 YouTube videos, 4.000 channel views 73 subscribers

Recommendations

All three cities have different strategies and approaches to online marketing. Nevertheless, they all lack two vital media of online communication: email marketing and forums. Only Copenhagen and Amsterdam offer the possibility to subscribe to their newsletters on the respective websites via permission email, but the newsletters are never sent. The author of this project subscribed for newsletters on both websites several times and since January 2011, but without ever receiving anything. Email marketing still represents a major online

communication medium, creating leads and developing business. The city of Prague does not even offer this service. It is crucial for cities to understand the importance of email marketing and integrate it into their online marketing strategies.

Cities should try to enhance their social media mix. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are the most important social networks in terms of user numbers, but there are many other networks that offer benefits the others cannot. National social networks like *Hyves* for the Netherlands or *StudiVz* for Germany integrate many users that do not use one of the main social networks but still integrate the target. Also, cities have to stimulate social network usage. Prague has to increase user numbers of all social networks. Copenhagen should try to increase the number of Facebook users to increase the network effect and having in mind the huge possibilities of Facebook users. Also, they should reactivate the Twitter account and use it efficiently, as their user numbers were actually the best of all cities. The YouTube channel is efficiently managed and benchmark for other cities. Amsterdam is the city that uses social networks the most for their intentions. Facebook user numbers are impressive but besides actively using Twitter and You Tube they should try to increase user numbers and stimulate user participation, as numbers are considerably low in comparison with other cities.

No website offers the possibility of rating the content. In today's Internet with web 2.0 integration everywhere, this feature would allow users to better understand the website's content and get real opinions from other users. Items for rating could be monuments, events, tours or restaurants.

The existence of forums on websites would be an additional feature to ensure interaction and monitor opinions by online marketers. Forums are used to discuss issues between users about a websites' contents or related issues, in this case the city of Lisbon and its offerings. Users can ask questions and help each other out. Online marketers can interact with users on forums and monitor forum discussions in order to get consumer insights and tips for improving customer service.

No city uses paid inclusion to advertise their website online. As a fact, the websites do always appear on the first ranks of the Google Search Engine, a clear sign of successful Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategies. However, a small amount in online advertising can produce big results and reach new targets. It is suggested to invest budgets until 1000 € in

online advertising for promoting the respective websites. Advertising can be done via Facebook and paid inclusion on travel websites in order to directly reach the target.

4.3 Internal analysis

Lisbon is the capital of Portugal and the countries' largest city. It has a population of approximately 500.000 and a metropolitan area of about 2,9 million people (INE, 2011). Lisbon is a historic city existing for more than 850 years located in Southeast Europe. During its history the city suffered influences from different nations like the Romans or Muslims and their influences are still visible today in the people and their culture. Lisbon is known for its mild climate, bright light and as a seaside capital. In 2009, Lisbon was awarded Europe's leading destination and Europe's leading cruise destination by the World Travel Awards, and in both 2009 and 2010 it was awarded Europe's leading City Break destination.[8]

Tourism

Tourism is one of the major economic sectors in Portugal and in 2010 tourism revenues reached 7,6 billion Euros, corresponding to 11% of the Portuguese Gross Domestic Product. Tourism is also one of the main drivers of job creation, representing 10.2% of the total working population. International tourism in Portugal is mostly dependent on four outbound markets (United Kingdom, Spain, Germany and France), representing 60% of international guests and 67% of revenues (Pent: 2007). Tourism today is the main national export activity and in 2010 represented 14 percent of exportations and 43 percent of revenues of service exportations.

Lisbon is Portugal's second most visited destiny behind the Algarve and before Madeira Islands and in 2009 the city registered 8,6 million overnight stays. The major visitor markets are Spain, Germany, Brazil, France, Italy, the UK, the Netherlands and the United States. Lisbon is also renown as a cruise destination and in 2010, 299 cruise liners landed in Lisbon with a corresponding 415.578 passengers (TLx14: 2011). In 2007, jobs in the tourism industry represented 9,8% of total employment with 139.000 employees. In 2009, 33% of Lisbon's visitors already used the Internet for trip booking (figure 43), revealing the importance of online marketing for the tourism industry.

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[8] http://www.worldtravelawards.com/profile-8079-lisbon-portugal

City Marketing

The organization in charge for Lisbon's marketing activities is *Turismo de Lisboa*. It is a non-profit organization and part of *Turismo de Portugal*, established through alliances between public and private entities of the tourism sector. The main objective of the organization is to promote Lisbon as a tourist destination and improve the quality and competitiveness of the city. *Turismo de Lisboa* is divided into two sections: the Visitors Bureau and the Convention Bureau. Unlike other cities, *Turismo de Lisboa* did not create a specific brand for the city and the corresponding visual identity.

Figure 44 – Visual Identity of Turismo de Lisboa

The TLx14 is the strategic marketing plan of *Turismo de Lisboa* and defines all strategic marketing actions for Lisbon from 2011 until 2014. The main objectives of this plan are increasing the number of visitors, upgrading the experience of visitors and generating more awareness of the destination. The brand identity and value proposal of the city was defined as "The indisputable seaside capital city, bordered by the river, unique in its way of welcoming, to be discovered as you wish." Therefore were created different tourism products divided into strategic products (City Breaks, Meeting Industry and Touring), priority products (Golf and Cruises) and supplemental products (Sun and Sea, Nature Tourism, Nautical Tourism, Religious Tourism, Residential Tourism, Gastronomy and Wine). Figure 45 graphically represents the investments in tourism products in target markets. The biggest investments are obviously made in countries responsible for the highest numbers of visitors, namely Spain, Germany, the United Kingdom and France. Brazil only appears on fifth position, being the country with the second highest number of inbound tourists. The investments in tourism products are adapted to the visitor countries' characteristics, like Golf for the UK or touring for Spain (figure 45).

Online City Marketing

Turismo de Lisboa did not define a specific online marketing strategy for Lisbon and no online activities are outlined in the TLx14 strategic marketing plan. Nevertheless they use the Internet for the marketing of the city and the online activities implemented include the website www.visitlisboa.com and a Facebook page.

Website

The website www.visitlisboa.com is Lisbon's official tourism portal (figure 46). In 2009, the website registered 2.154.500 hits from users all around the world, revealing the importance of online marketing for Lisbon's marketing strategy. The online portal is mainly destined for leisure tourists and presents the city and the most important attractions. The categories are about Lisbon, the culture, accommodation, golf and the convention bureau, representing the MICE sector. Information displayed is of little interest for habitants of Lisbon or long-term tourists, as no practical information about life in Lisbon is included.

Figure 47 - Number of hits on visitlisboa.com, in thousands
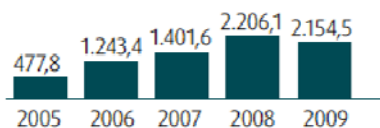
Source: TLx14

The websites' content embraces the cities' monuments, hotels, routes to take and places to visit. A news section provides up to date content and the clipping area monitors the presence of Lisbon in national and international media. The website also offers two online magazines for download: *Follow me Lisboa* and *Revista Turismo de Lisboa*. Both magazines are distributed offline as well and provide information about events, concerts or restaurants. The *Revista Turismo de Lisboa* also includes statistical data of Lisbon's observatory of tourism. On contrary to the online tourism portals of the three benchmarked cities, the website displays a list of hotels but does not make booking available, making it of non-commercial purpose. Golf is included into the websites' content as a menu item with direct access, representing a

priority product defined by the TLx14. The convention bureau shares this privilege, representing the meeting industry and also a strategic product defined by the TLx14. Gastronomy, as a supplemental product of the Tlx14, appears also in the menu bar, offering information about food and beverages of Lisbon. All the other products defined by the TLx14 such as City Breaks or Nautical Tourism are not represented on the website, clearly showing deficits in transferring products of the offline strategy into the online strategy.

The menu item convention bureau represents the MICE sector on the website. It provides an extensive list of venues and events of Lisbon for business purposes, as well as a list of local enterprises working in the sector. The content is restricted and requires registration and login, always a factor of abandoning a site, especially if other cities offer the same information without registration.

The website presents no differential feature that would distinguish it from other tourism websites. In fact, it only offers content for leisure tourism promotion. By not segmenting the content, no targets besides leisure tourist are directly engaged and the website is only interesting for a reduced part of the potential target.

Social Networks

Turismo de Lisboa has a Facebook page with nearly 9.000 likes (figure 48). Online marketers of Lisbon use it to communicate with their targets and display content about Lisbon, surroundings, upcoming events and promote contests. Marketers interact directly with Facebook users and clarify doubts about their trips and visits to Lisbon. The Facebook strategy is complex and embraces different ways to create interaction with consumers. However, the number of likes is considerably low, having in mind numbers of other cities. This fact should be inverted in order to acquire more benefits from Facebook services. Also, the social media mix of Lisbon is limited to Facebook as they have no Twitter account, You Tube channel or any other social network page. The diversification of networks and contents to communicate with all possible targets enriches a social network strategy, as every network offers different approaches to connect with consumers.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT Analysis is a strategic planning tool. It is used to evaluate a organizations' competitive position by analysing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. While the strengths and weaknesses are internal factors, opportunities and threats are external factors to the organization.

As strengths Lisbon can include the location next to the sea, the rich history, the good price/service relation, the climate, thegastronomy, the low crimerate, the openess of the city and the cultural diversity.

As weaknesses can be found the remote location inside Europe, the low number of low cost airline connections,the relative small size in relation to other capitals, the desertification of the centreand the inexistence of internationally renownattractions.

Opportunities for Lisbon are the rebounding international tourism market. Also, the explorationof new markets like China or the intensification in future marktes like Brazil represent an opportunity, as their economies will stimulate inboundtourism. Finally, the creation of new city products that attract more visitors are also a opportunity.

The main threat for Lisbon is the fear of a new economic crisis in Europe. If the european economy stagnates of even decreases, the consequences for Lisbon will be devastating. Lisbon depends primary on European tourism and cannot afford to loose share in this market. Other threats are mainly other cities and capitals and price dumping in competitinglocations. Finally, the demographic movement towards an older society is a big threat for Lisbon, as tourism may slow down.

4.4 Online communication plan

The online communication plan is divided into the following sections: objectives, targets, actions, control, budget and timetable.

4.4.1   Objectives

The objectives of the online communication plan are different from the objectives of the defined marketing strategy. The TLx14 defines as objectives increasing the number of visitors, upgrading the experience of visitors and generating more awareness of the destination. The objectives for the online communication plan are:

- Raise the awareness of Lisbon and the Lisbon brand in target markets
- Increase the number of Lisbon's visitors (first-time and returning)
- Fight seasonality of tourism by communicating throughout the year

4.4.2   Targets

The online communication plan for the city of Lisbon is directed to different targets. As a result, the global market of visitors will be divided into different segments. The segmentation process is limited to the criteria of age and the geographical location. The age was defined between 20 and 65. The main market lies between these ages, as People in this age have enough buying power and present no physical limitations for travelling. Some of Lisbon's products like nautical tourism or golf depend largely on the consumer's interest in these activities. For these products can be applied the psychographic criteria of interest and lifestyles. The communication target also includes initiators, influencers, consumer motivators and decision markers. These targets have a crucial influence on people's decisions and therefore have to be part of the target. In the travel and tourism industry, consumer motivators and influencers are travel magazines, online and offline, trip advisors, blogs and travel agencies. They will be targeted with specific business orientated information about the new online strategy of Lisbon and regularly provided with tourism related news.

Most of Lisbon's visitors are originated from Europe. Due to this fact, it was decided to separate markets as the following: Europe and Rest of the World. Europe is also divided into prime markets and secondary markets. For Europe, prime markets are:

- Spain

- Germany

- France

- Italy

- UK & Ireland

Spain and Germany alone are responsible for more than a third of Lisbon's visitors in 2010 (figure 52). The concentration on these two countries is no surprise at all, as they are largely responsible for tourism incomes. France, Italy and the UK &Ireland are the other top European visitor countries. All together, they form the biggest part of Lisbon's tourism industry with more than two thirds of global tourism incomes. Lisbon experienced low tourism growth rates from all of these countries with constant shares over the last years. They are saturated markets with many tourists being returning visitors. Nonetheless, they still are the most important countries in terms of tourism incomes for the city of Lisbon. Secondary European markets for the online communication plan of Lisbon are:

- The Netherlands

- Belgium

- Austria

- Sweden

- Switzerland

- Norway

- Finland

- Denmark

- Czech Republic

Inbound tourism from secondary markets is not as important as form primary markets. They form the rest of European visitors and together are responsible for the second most important group of Lisbon's visitors globally. Most of them are also saturated markets but of vital importance for Lisbon's tourism industry.

In order to simplify the process, for the rest of the world will only be defined the prime markets as they represent strategic decisions of investments. They are Brazil, the United States, Russia and China

Brazil, as an ex-colony of Portugal, shares a common history and the same official language, a facilitating factor for tourism and investor relations. Brazil is already the country with the second highest number of visitors and has the highest growth rate of all countries (figure 52). The country offers big future opportunities with nearly 200 million inhabitants and a booming economy, gaining new consumers every year. The concentration on the Brazilian market has to be intensive as the market represents the future of Lisbon's tourism and the most important market for expansion.

The United States are also responsible for a high number of visitors and represent a future market in terms of tourism for Lisbon. It is the richest country in the world with more than 300 million habitants. In 2010, 350.000 Americans visited Lisbon, (figure 52) representing 0,001% of the countries' population. For a country of this dimensions and possibilities, the increase of inbound tourism is possible and depends on an effective and intense marketing and communication strategy.

Russian tourism is a recent phenomenon, as nowadays many Russians can afford to travel due to economic increase. Russian tourism in Lisbon is still in the early stages and presents moderate numbers of inbound tourists and growth rates. Yet, Russia is a developing country with more than 140 million habitants that benefit from economic increase, and more people will be able to travel in the future.

China today is not one of Portugal's main visitor markets. It is the biggest country on earth in terms of habitants with a fast growing economy and increasing outbound tourism travel. Due to these facts China has to be one of the strategic markets for Lisbon's tourism. As with Brazil and any other of the prime markets worldwide, increase of tourism numbers depends largely on successful marketing and promotion strategies. The Internet and online communications play a vital role in this task. They permit the targeting of visitors in a cost-effective way, on contrary to traditional advertising or presence on fairs that are much more expensive.

Resuming, targets of the online communication plan are between 20 and 65 old and live in Brazil, the United States, Russia, China, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Spain, Germany, France, Italy and the UK & Ireland. Micro targets have specific interests in sports and recreational activities possible to fulfill in Lisbon.

4.4.3   Actions, tools and channels

Actions of the online communication plan define how the developed strategy is applied to target markets. The plan has the objective of growth, both in terms of Lisbon's awareness and inbound tourism. These actions require intense marketing and communication activities. The online communication plan will be implemented through the following tools: the Lisbon brand, a website, email marketing, social networks, forums, blogs, mobile marketing and online advertising. The content of all communication media is created in coherence with the positioning of Lisbon and the defined values. Contents communicated will depend on the time of the year, focusing different benefits of Lisbon in every season.

City Brand Lisbon

Lisbon does not possess a strong city brand that would permit the distinction from other cities and the clear identification of the cities' values. Cities like Amsterdam or Copenhagen built strong brands that are visible throughout all marketing communication material and are part of the city. Values are integrated into the respective brands, making it a tool of internal and external communication. The brand has to authenticate Lisbon's offer as a city and differentiate it from other European capitals through a strong brand personality, creating value.

The current brand strategy defined by *Turismo de Lisboa* in the TLx14 is based on the value proposal "The indisputable seaside capital city, bordered by the river, unique in its way of welcoming, to be discovered as you wish." *Turismo de Lisboa* defined five elements for target communication in order to differentiate the city: Lisbon's added value is defined as being a capital city, located to the sea, border by the river, unique in its way of welcoming and open to be discovered. *Turismo de Lisboa* does not define a visual identity for the Lisbon brand. To create a successful city brand, visual identification is necessary. It helps people to associate

the city with values and create positive associations. The only existing identification is of *Turismo de Lisboa*. The physical implementation of the brand into the city is therefore impossible.

The perceptual map frames Lisbon between European competitors. The map is divided into two dimensions: the price, high or low, and the climate, warm or cold. To position each city on the map, the most direct associations are used for references. Lisbon is relatively cheap in comparison with other European capitals. At the same time, Lisbon has a warm climate that distinguishes it from other capitals. Capitals in Europe with a warm climate like Madrid, Paris or Rome are expensive cities. At the same time, Copenhagen has a cold climate but is also an expensive city, a reality shared with cities like London or Stockholm. Amsterdam appears as a mixture, having a relatively cold climate but being less expensive than Copenhagen. Prague is colder than Amsterdam but more accessible, approaching it to cities like Bucharest or Warsaw. Lisbon appears with a unique position, being a warm capital in southern Europe and monetary accessible.

Figure 49 – Perceptual map of Lisbon
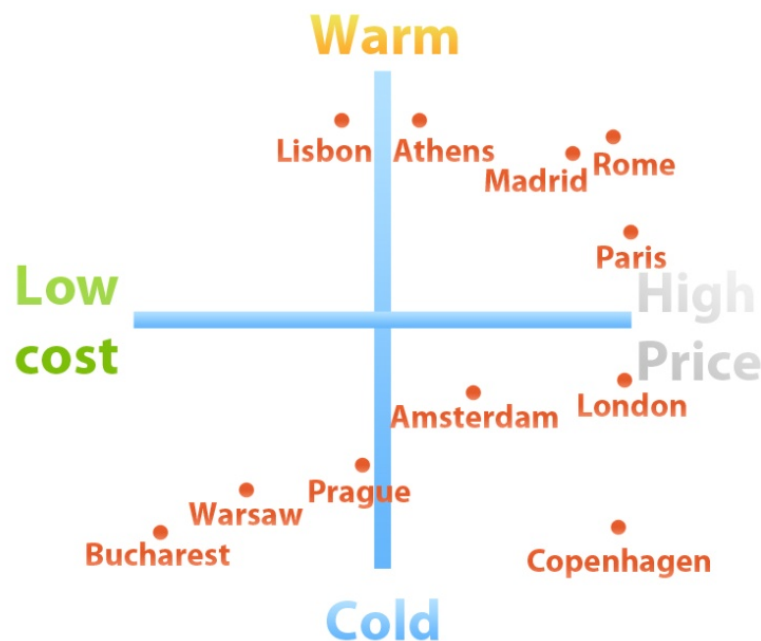
Positioning

The positioning is a strategic choice. It gives the product/service a credible identity and distinguishes it from other products by situating it on the market with a unique value proposal.

Identification

Lisbon has to be identified as the Portuguese capital, situated in southern Europe, on the Iberian Peninsula. The global identification has to be as a European capital. In Europe, Lisbon is primary identified as being part of southern Europe, as a capital, historic, sunny and of roman origin.

Differentiation

The value proposal of the TLx14, "The indisputable seaside capital city, bordered by the river, unique in its way of welcoming, to be discovered as you wish" is partially valid but not accurate enough to be communicated and to be understood by the target as a proposition of value. The selected values should make the positioning of a brand unique and differentiate it from other cities. However, not all of the five defined values have to be integrated into the value proposal, as they do not differentiate Lisbon as a city. Lisbon is in fact a capital, but so are also 26 other cities in the European Union. "Unique in its way of welcoming" is a generic value proposition and every city claims their habitants of being friendly and welcoming people. The values communicated through the brand have to be unique and permit Lisbon's differentiation, making it unique in its competitive universe, namely between European capitals. The Lisbon brand has to focus on some of cities' unique values:

- Lisbon's location as a capital, surrounded by the sea, next to the Tagus river and beaches
- Lisbon's unique history and architecture
- The excellent price/service relation in comparison to other European capitals
- The openness to be discovered combined with the low crime rate and the corresponding safe environment
- Lisbon's climate and cultural habits

These factors effectively differentiate Lisbon from other cities, as they do not possess the same qualities. Especially the location next to beaches and the river supports the differentiation, as no other capital in Southern Europe possesses this quality. To communicate these values, they have to be integrated into the personality of the Lisbon brand.

Visual identity

The visual identification consists of three elements: name, logotype and the slogan. The name of the brand is Lisbon, as it is the cities' name. Added to the name is the logotype, slogan and brand identity. The brand has to focus on the defined values and express them. The excellent price/service relation of Lisbon is difficult to communicate, as the risk of appearing cheap is high. The most distinctive features of Lisbon are the location, the architecture, the climate and the history. These values have to be integrated into the visual identification, combining them and making them understandable for the public. The brand has to communicate that in Lisbon you find a historic town with unique architecture that is located right next to the river and beaches to enjoy the sunny weather, a fact no other European capital can offer the same way. The slogan is: Live Life in Lisbon! It is an appeal for visitors to come to Lisbon and enjoy life the most by visiting Lisbon's historic places, riverside locations and nearby beaches. The visual identification needs a clear and clean appearance and has to be open, shiny, including visual representations of the sun, the city and the sea.

The website

The website for Lisbon has to be functional by presenting essential information for leisure visitors, businesses and habitants. It has to be an online platform of the city with full integration of social networks, chats for consumer interaction, webcams of Lisbon and live broadcasting. The general appearance of the site has to be more modern and clean than the current, focusing on the defined values with background images of Lisbon's historic city and beaches. Like other cities, it will also make booking of hotels available in order to gain margins from sales. A news section provides up to date content about Lisbon. For leisure tourists, information about monuments, the city, the history and important locations are essential. For direct costumer interaction, three different features will be available on the website: first, an online "click to call" button, allowing conversations over IP through a service like Skype. Also, online texts chat with a service person for instant clarifications and last, online video chat with a service person to clarify doubts. These three features offer different ways for people to interact directly with the online team of *Turismo de Lisboa*. Webcams help people to get a feeling of the cities' vibe while live broadcasting allows users to assist events and shows via live stream from home. Both are features of approximating the target with Lisbon's day-to-day life in order to create customer loyalty.

The current website of Lisbon only integrates three of the defined products of the TLx14: Meeting Industry, Gastronomy and Golf. The Meeting Industry is represented through the Convention Bureau while Gastronomy and Golf have their own categories. To practice a coherent strategy, more defined products have to be integrated on the website, as the content will attract potential city visitors. The products that will be available on the website are: City Breaks, MICE (divided into business and non business), Cruises, Sports tourism (Golf, Nautical tourism and Surf tourism),Wine tourism, Gastronomy and Sun & Sea.

The first category will be called city. It offers all the information about the city, the history, monuments, museums, accessibility, maps, transportation networks, the weather and shopping. This section will be the access point for most visitors for generic tourist information about Lisbon.

City Breaks are of vital importance for the city. A big part of Lisbon's tourism industry is City Break tourism. Lisbon was distinguished Europe's leading City Break destination and has to take advantage of this fact. On the website, a complete category has to be created for this travel activity. The information available has to focus on City Break characteristics, basically the short duration and the reduced travel parties. City Break visitors need to plan their short stays according to availability. Information should be around trip recommendations for 2 or 3 day stays that include Lisbon's most important offerings, transportation ways and special offers for City Break visitors.

The MICE sector will be divided into two sections: business and non-business. The business section offers information about the possibilities of the meeting industry in Lisbon presenting venues, events and local MICE enterprises. The content will be similar to what already exists on the current website, but presented in a more interactive way and without the necessity of registration. The non-business part has to be about festivals and events taking place in Lisbon. This category includes music festivals and concerts, cultural events like theatre plays or exhibitions. The information is for both visitors and habitants of Lisbon. Also, live streams of events taking place in Lisbon and special online events have to be included into this category. Online events are events specifically created for online users to assist via the Internet and can be online-guided tours of an important monument or question and answer sessions. Ratings by website visitors of event venues and organizations will contribute to information diversification and user generated content.

Cruises are another important item that has to be included on the website due to raising numbers of cruise tourism in Lisbon. Information in this section has to be very precise and embrace excursions, the most important attractions, famous restaurants, events taking place in Lisbon and hotels to book for a night. Cruise visitors only stay for a very short amount of time, usually between one and two days. Information displayed has to facilitate their options of visiting and moving around inside the city. Besides the similarity with City Break visitors regarding the short time of the stay, cruise guests have different needs as they tend to stay at the cruise liner over night and most of the time of their journey. The just tend to visit the most iconic places of a city.

Sports Tourism is a category that is not included on Lisbon's website or on any other of the benchmarked cities' websites. However, it is a significant tourism market for Lisbon as the city represents an important destination for sports related tourism, for spectators as well as for participants. Golf is one of the major contributors of sports tourism in Portugal and Lisbon. The country has some of the best golf courses in the world offering excellent conditions. Nautical tourism, especially around Cascais, is a considerable tourism activity and the greater Lisbon area offers outstanding locations and conditions for this kind of sports practice, hosting several national and international events. Also, over the last years, surf tourism experienced a significant growth of inbound tourists practicing the sports of surfing, body boarding, windsurfing and kite surf. The greater Lisbon area offers unique conditions and hosts several international events, being one of the best surf locations in Europe. For sports tourism spectators, information displayed has to be about Lisbon's football stadiums and national championship, the Estoril racing track for the Moto GP, the Estoril Tennis Open and Sail events of Lisbon and surroundings. Visitors will also have the opportunity to buy tickets for these events and be able to comment and rate every destination or event.

A category for Gastronomy already exists on the current website of Lisbon but displays very limited information. Currently, restaurants are presented by a list with contact information. The new website will embrace this item in a more direct way by explaining Portuguese gastronomy and cuisine, presenting local dishes, the best restaurants and their backgrounds. People will have the possibility to make restaurant reservation through the website and leave comments and ratings about each restaurant.

Wine tourism is not included on the current website but provides a unique opportunity. Lisbon is located near to important wine area sides like Setubal, being part of the *Extremadura* wine area. The proximity to these wineries will develop this tourism market in and around Lisbon. Visitors will have the opportunity to visit the city combined with visits of nearby wineries on the same day. Information published has to contain daily tours and descriptions of every winery included. Again, users will be able to comment and rate content.

At last, Sun & Sea is also suggested to form a category. Information in this category has to be about nearby beaches divided into *Linha de Cascais*, *Costa da Caparica* and riverside locations in Lisbon. Information will include maps of locations and access information, and will be rated by visitors.

For the people of Lisbon and people planning to move to the city will be available an extra category named Life in Lisbon. The content incorporates explanations of the housing process, clarifies local habits, displays work opportunities of partner organizations and registration orders needed for registering in Lisbon as a citizen and for work purpose. This service provides key information for everyone living or wanting to live in Lisbon.

In addition, there will be available multimedia content on the website: videos and photos of Lisbon, live streams, traditional and modern Portuguese music and widgets for visitors to store on their computers. Widgets are small applications like digital clocks or calendars that can be used for marketing purposes and include graphical elements of the city. Nearly all content of the site has to be able for user comments and ratings. This information represents authentic opinions about Lisbon's offerings and valid advice from other visitors.

Social networks

The Social network approach has to be integral and coherent. The current social media strategy for Lisbon only includes a Facebook page with a relative low number of likes. The social media mix should be vertical and include several networks, as every network has its own characteristics and benefits, representing different ways to reach consumers and interact with them.

For the purpose of this project the implementation of the social networks Facebook, Twitter, You Tube and Foursquare is suggested. They represent some of the most important social networks in terms of user numbers and strategic options for Lisbon's online communication plan.

Facebook is the most important social network in the world with more than 700 million users (figure 15). Facebook allows users to create a personal profile, to like a page, connect to other users, create and join groups, exchange messages, update their status and share photos, videos or external links. The existing Facebook page already has a structure sharing information about Lisbon, events and photos with their fans. However, the approach to Facebook has to be more interactive and suggestive. The number of likes has to be increased to create a more powerful network effect. For that reason will be created interactive Facebook applications like Facebook quizzes and contests to win prizes. The questions of Facebook quizzes are about Lisbon and there will be 10 questions for every quiz. Winners win prices like Lisbon cards or event tickets. Facebook contests involve users and encourage them to send the most creative Lisbon pictures, videos or phrases about Lisbon in order to win trips to Lisbon. Both initiatives will create more traffic for the Facebook page and the website.

Twitter is a powerful social network but has some limitations in comparison to Facebook. Twitter only allows users to send text messages of up to 140 characters, the "tweets", and follow other users. Videos and photos cannot directly be shown and shared like on Facebook, being displayed through external links. Through Twitter, users are enabled to give constant status updates, as Facebook is more about sharing and exchanging personal information with other users. It can be understood as the Internet SMS service, having the same characteristics as this mobile phone service. Twitter targets are mostly Smartphone users who are constantly online, updating their statuses. The approach to Twitter has to be similar as to Facebook, by sharing the same information only in a different way. Twitter can create traffic for the website and the Facebook page with new issues being communicated through short messages. Facebook contests and quizzes are communicated through Twitter and the news section of the site, as users might come from Twitter as well. Every kind of news communicated on the website or other social networks will also be content on Twitter, including the links. Measuring Twitter benefits is more difficult, having only the number of followers as a reference without interactions taking place. The most important issue for the Twitter account

is gaining followers from the first moment on to not make the same negative experiences with this social network that other cities did.

The You Tube channel of Lisbon has to include videos about Lisbon, the monuments, the gastronomy, local beaches, guided tours and video contests for winning trips to Lisbon. The benchmark showed that You Tube tends to be forgotten by online marketers to communicate with their target. You Tube has not the same characteristics of other social networks. Yet, it can really assist in building a community by the use on videos. Users can subscribe to a channel and leave comments and interact via the commentary area. Having a well-known channel and self-produced videos with original content creates a genuine video service for consumers. With thousand of amateur videos existing about Lisbon and other cities, the channel would represent a form of differentiation and offer a prime quality service.

Foursquare is the only one of the chosen social networks that yet lacks bigger notoriety. It is a social network that offers geo-location services and is the biggest one in this area, having more than 3 million users. The increase of Smartphone sells and the general access to mobile Internet made this service possible. Foursquare is a social media service that only targets constantly online Smartphone users that are willing to share their lives with others. The mechanism works like a game that features the possibility of unlocking a city by virtually checking into different locations like restaurants, bars, public squares or anything of interest via the Smartphone and GPS. For every check-in, users gain points and compete with friends and other users of the same city to be first in the rankings. Users can earn badges for going to a specific place and can create locations inside a city so other users can check in when being there. Users can also leave comments about the virtual location. The user with the most check-ins has the right to digitally command a location via Foursquare. For Lisbon, it would be important using Foursquare for monitoring costumers and their opinions, detecting the places with most check-ins and create locations themselves on the Foursquare map of Lisbon. Foursquare can help to establish interaction and create content. It is a complete new way of engaging costumers and Foursquare use should be stimulated through the website and other social networks.

Email marketing

Email marketing is a powerful mean for consumer engagement and marketing communication. Yet, it is not practiced by city marketers of Lisbon or by any other of the benchmarked cities. For the online communication plan will be implemented permission email marketing, also called opt-in email marketing. Traditional email marketing was basically the sending of emails to a list of receivers. The databases used in email marketing were often bought from other businesses and therefore the success rate of these campaigns is relatively low, as most people and servers do not read unknown content and mark it as spam. Permission email marketing requires the permission of a user for sending emails and therefore is more likely to be successful. Users leave their names and email addresses in a sample form and will then receive emails on a regular basis. The content of Lisbon's email marketing will be published in form of e-Newsletters. This format represents the common newsletter in digital form, communicating issues of Lisbon, news, events and hotels. Every edition will have a special focus such as gastronomy or events taking place in Lisbon. Also, special issues of social networks like the contests will appear in the e-newsletter. The e-Newsletter will be sent twice a month in Portuguese, English and Spanish directed to habitants, leisure tourists and businesses.

Mobile marketing

Marketing on mobile devices is a recent trend as technological advances only made it possible during the last years. The creation of an app for Lisbon is a strategic product for mobile users. The app can offer interesting content for visitors and habitants of the city. Consumers will be able to consult detailed information about monuments, museums or restaurants, check their location on the map via GPS, buy tickets for concerts or events, enjoy guided tours of Lisbon and an online dictionary.

Blog

A blog for Lisbon would be beneficial in order to write about the city in a more personal way, allowing sharing experiences with the public with links to the website and social networks. Content will include visits to events and personal experiences of life in Lisbon of some of

Turismo de Lisboa employees and outsiders. The blog will be available as a section of the website

Forum

A forum offers the possibility for users to interact with each other, not in instant way but through messages that are stored and ordered by threads. Every user can create a thread with a question of affirmation and every user can comment on this thread. Posts are shown in reverse chronologically order so the most recent entry is displayed on top. Forums seem to be outdated but they still are a vital item of communication in the online world. People can consult information produced by others throughout the existence of the forum and consumers can help other consumers. Especially in the tourism market pertinent question like the best hotel or restaurant are timeless and content in forums discussing Lisbon's offerings can only be beneficial.

Online advertising

Unlike other cities, the online communication plan will also include online advertising. Through contacts with city marketing entities of the benchmarked cities the author was able to detect that no city practices any form of online advertising. Yet, the benefits are undeniable and with a relative small amount of investment in relation to traditional advertising, it is possible to achieve good results. Online advertising will be implemented through Social Media Marketing and Affiliate Marketing. Social media marketing is advertising in social networks like Facebook or Foursquare and is an excellent way to target online users. Users can be segmented by country, region, city, age, interests, universities frequented or languages spoken.

Affiliate marketing is an online practice by which the advertiser pays the affiliate for each visitor brought to the website, creating traffic from one website to another. For this, affiliates can use advertising material created by the advertiser and include them on partner sites. For the online communication plan of Lisbon will be used the affiliate marketing system *Tradedoubler* that holds partnerships with a big number of travel websites that will create traffic for Lisbon's website.

Figure 50 - Information Flux graphic
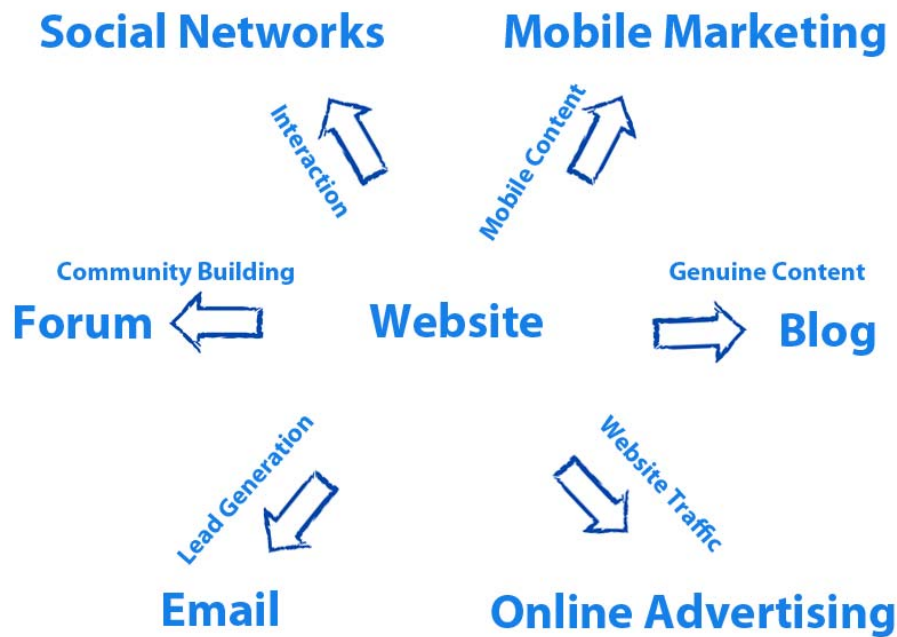
The information flux of the online communication plan is centered on the website visitlisboa.com. It represents the most important element of the online presence and starting point for most marketing interactions and actions taking place between *Turismo de Lisboa* and their targets. Users will be able to access the forum, blog and social networks via the site, subscribe for the email newsletter and find information about mobile marketing. Online advertising creates inbound traffic for the website.

The primary functions of social networks are costumer interaction and relationship building. Lisbon's social networks will create traffic for the website and at the same time provide unique content itself to build relations with their target. Blogs provide genuine content with personal views, and the Lisbon blog will offer city related information through a more intimate perspective. The forum on visitlisboa.com will contribute to the building of a community of national and foreign visitors for information exchange about Lisbon. Email marketing is a vital element for lead generation and new business of any organization and will help Lisbon to expand its business. Lisbon's mobile marketing will offer mobile content for Smartphone users while online advertising is basically used to target new costumers and create awareness of the website, the city and the Lisbon brand.

4.4.4   Control

Control is one of the most important aspects in the communication process. It permits the detection of errors and their elimination. Many times, controlling is forgotten and problems rise without establishing control mechanism. One way of controlling consumer satisfaction is online surveys. For this project they serve to measure the impact of online communication on consumers and detect positive and negative aspects of the implemented strategy. Regular surveys help to improve the performance quality of an organization. Another way of controlling is clippings. They assist in becoming aware of an organizations' media coverage. Clipping are the detection of news articles about an organization in the media, in this case the city of Lisbon. Articles are analyzed by the source of the media, date and content. The most important indicators are the number of articles published and if the content is positive or negative.

4.4.5   Budget

The global budget for this project is defined with 60.000 Euros. This includes the creation and updating of the website (10.000€), creation and management of social networks and the forum (5.000€), the creation of the visual identity (5.000€), the development of the mobile app (10.000€), online advertising (1.200€), videos (7.500€), contest prices (4.500€) and the annual payment for a social media manager (14x1200€).

4.4.6   Timetable

Figure 51 – Timetable for online communication plan
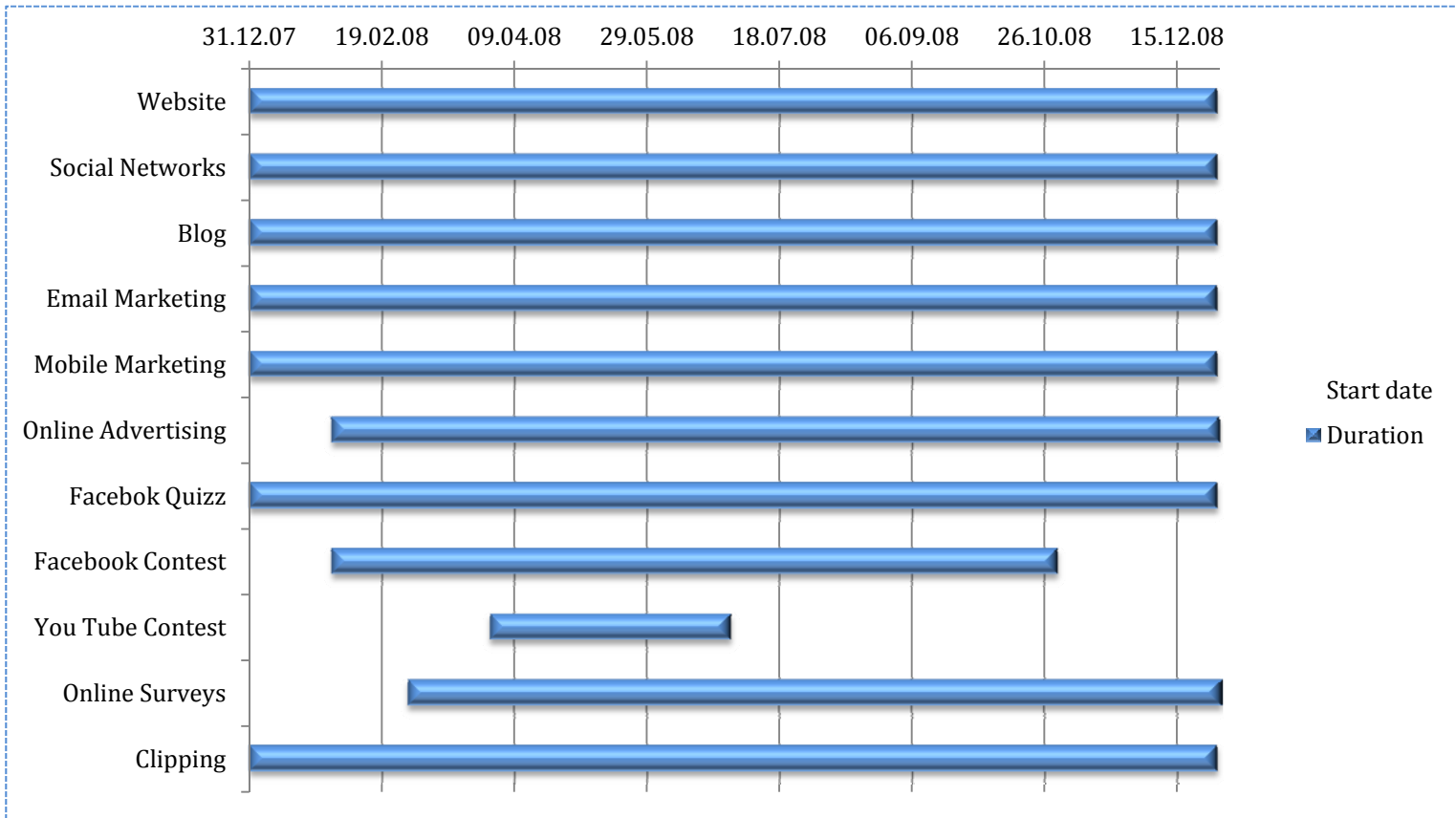
The timetable represents graphically the distribution of marketing actions in 2012. The website, social networks, blog, email marketing and mobile marketing will be used as communication media throughout the year. Online advertising will only be used in key moments, namely February and March for Easter and summer holidays, in May and June for summer holidays and October and November for New Year holiday promotion. Facebook quizzes will be used throughout the year to create Facebook and website traffic. Facebook contests to win trips to Lisbon will be held three times in 2012: in February, June and October. The trips will happen during the corresponding Easter, summer and New Year holidays. The YouTube contest will only be held once, between March and June, as it carries high costs of video production and implementation. Online surveys will be operated four times between February and December 2012 to get consumer insights and improve online services. Finally, the clipping of Lisbon will be conducted all year long.

5. Forms of implementation

The implementation of this project into the structure of *Turismo de Lisboa* will only be possible through adjustments and reorientations on various levels.

Budget adjustments are indispensable. 60.000 Euros represent a moderate investment. They correspond to a long-term rentable asset for the future of *Turismo de Lisboa* and the city of Lisbon. Benefits from hotel margin sales and the increase of visitors will create extra incomes for Lisbon's tourism industry and cause a positive return on investment.

In order to integrate online marketing into *Turismo de Lisboa's* structure, it has to be included into the marketing plan of Lisbon. The coordination with traditional marketing and other areas of intervention will allow the sharing of resources. Managing marketing globally permits to create transversal strategies adapted to all media.

The effective management of digital relations between visitor targets and *Turismo de Lisboa* requires the employment of social media manager. Only a professional and experienced individual in social media can implement social media strategies effectively and drive social networks. The success depends critically on the boost of user numbers and the diversification of contents.

The control of the campaigns' development is crucial to improve the performance. Regular updates and statistical data help to correct and remediate errors. Especially in the early stages many mistakes will be made and readjustments will be necessary to guarantee success.

The whole project represents a long-term process. By observing trends, the strategy will need regular updates and new online media have to be included, representing new ways of consumer engagement. The Internet is a very creative medium and every year new tools of consumer engagement appear on the market. *Turismo de Lisboa* has to analyze the benefits and integrate them if they serve the business' purpose.

6. Conclusions

This project serves to reflect the impact of online marketing and communications on organizations. It represents an introduction to online marketing and includes implications on managerial level.

The objectives of the project are (1) to provide an online communication plan to the city of Lisbon, (2) demonstrate benefits of online communication in consumer interaction and retention, (3) contribute to increase the number of Lisbon's visitors (first-time and returning) and (4) alert marketers for the necessity of an online strategy and the inclusion into the strategic marketing plan. The project includes the online communication plan for Lisbon (1) adapted to target markets. The benefits of online communication are demonstrated and explained (2), including examples of best practices. The contribution to an increase of visitor numbers (3) will only be observable on a long-term basis, namely in consumer behavior and online reservations. Through this project, marketers are alerted to implement online strategies (4) to successfully engage new consumers.

For *Turismo de Lisboa*, the project provides an online communication plan for Lisbon and the proposal for a brand identity. These elements facilitate the achievement of business purposes. Results of the market and benchmark analysis represent important insights for marketing managers. For Lisbon, innovation through new forms of developing business is crucial for the future success of the tourism industry.

By creating and implementing an innovative online strategy, Lisbon can gain competitive advantages over European competitors. notoriety, the implementation of a brand and customer loyalty. The cost- Online marketing is proven to be an effective way to achieve customer loyalty, mainly through personal interaction via social networks and blogs. The successful management of the online marketing mix permits to achieve all defined goals for marketing and communication such as the increase of effective structure of online marketing represents a major advantage, being able to achieve good results with moderate investments.

Managerial implications

The project assists businesses in reaching their targets and achieving their goals online. It advises organizations to adapt their business models to the online world. Models for business management are constantly changing and have to integrate new realities. Therefore, the reorganization of budgets represents a key factor for a successful integration of online marketing. In addition, the human resources structure also has to integrate these changes and incorporate additional resources. In short, organizations have to adapt on all levels: monetary, human resources and business orientation. They have to listen to their consumers and accompany them to guarantee proximity and attend their needs. Consumers will feel closer to the brand and express their opinions. The simple website is not enough anymore to succeed online.

Limitations

This project also has its limitations. The subject under study is fairly new. Therefore, not many publications are available about online marketing and communications and their effect on organizations and businesses. Especially the focus on online marketing for cities represents a niche market and makes information available even more scarce. As a result, literature reviewed and studies analyzed incorporated related themes of online marketing and expanded the area of study.

Also, the number of cities included for research is relatively low. Four cities in Europe only represent a reduced part of online marketing in Europe. The representation is limited and will affect results and interpretations. A larger sample of cities would allow a more faithful representation of online marketing and communications in European cities and permit the generalization of results.

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Appendices – Figures and tables

Figure 3 - Visitor numbers of Lisbon 2009

|	Valor	Variação %	
Espanha	1.090.358	3,4%	▲
Alemanha	480.857	-10,2%	▼
Reino Unido e Irlanda	471.297	-20,6%	▼
Itália	371.553	-10,8%	▼
França	471.661	-0,9%	▼
Bélgica e Holanda	345.924	7,2%	▼
Escandinávia	292.612	-13,1%	▼
Rússia	71.402	-8,4%	▼
Polónia, Hungria e Rep. Checa	100.695	-13,9%	▼
EUA	295.614	-5,1%	▼
Brasil	351.382	-10,6%	▼
Japão	62.218	-3,0%	▼

Source: INE via Lisbon's observatory of Tourism, 2010

Figure 4 – Number of overnights of European capitals in 2010

|	Valor	Variação %		Período
Amesterdão	8.411.600	15,5%	▲	Out
Barcelona	15.342.476	8,4%	▲	Dez
Berlim	19.415.302	11,2%	▲	Nov
Bilbau	689.353	9,9%	▲	Jul
Bratislava	1.375.080	2,5%	▲	Dez
Budapeste	5.084.177	9,0%	▲	Out
Copenhaga	4.687.867	12,7%	▲	Nov
Génova	1.293.783	4,2%	▲	Out
Gotemburgo (região)	3.392.352	5,0%	▲	Dez
Hamburgo	7.526.592	8,0%	▲	Out
Helsínquia	3.178.053	9,2%	▲	Dez
Madrid	11.203.248	12,7%	▲	Set
Munique	11.156.532	12,4%	▲	Dez
Paris	26.953.726	6,8%	▲	Set
Praga	9.081.234	6,5%	▲	Set
Roma	20.395.361	9,1%	▲	Dez
San Sebastian	910.217	10,9%	▲	Dez
Estocolmo	6.523.956	3,9%	▲	Dez
Taline	2.291.511	18,8%	▲	Dez
Valencia	3.589.360	6,8%	▲	Dez
Viena (região)	10.689.853	12,0%	▲	Nov
Zagreb	1.037.960	2,2%	▲	Dez
Zurique	2.752.445	7,8%	▲	Set

Source: ECM, TourMIS via Lisbon's observatory of Tourism, 2011

Figure 6 – Targets of City Marketing
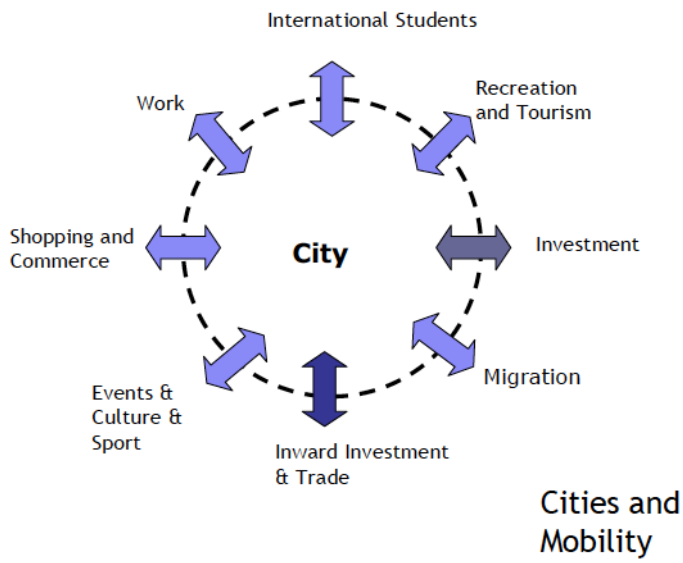
Source: Clark (2006)
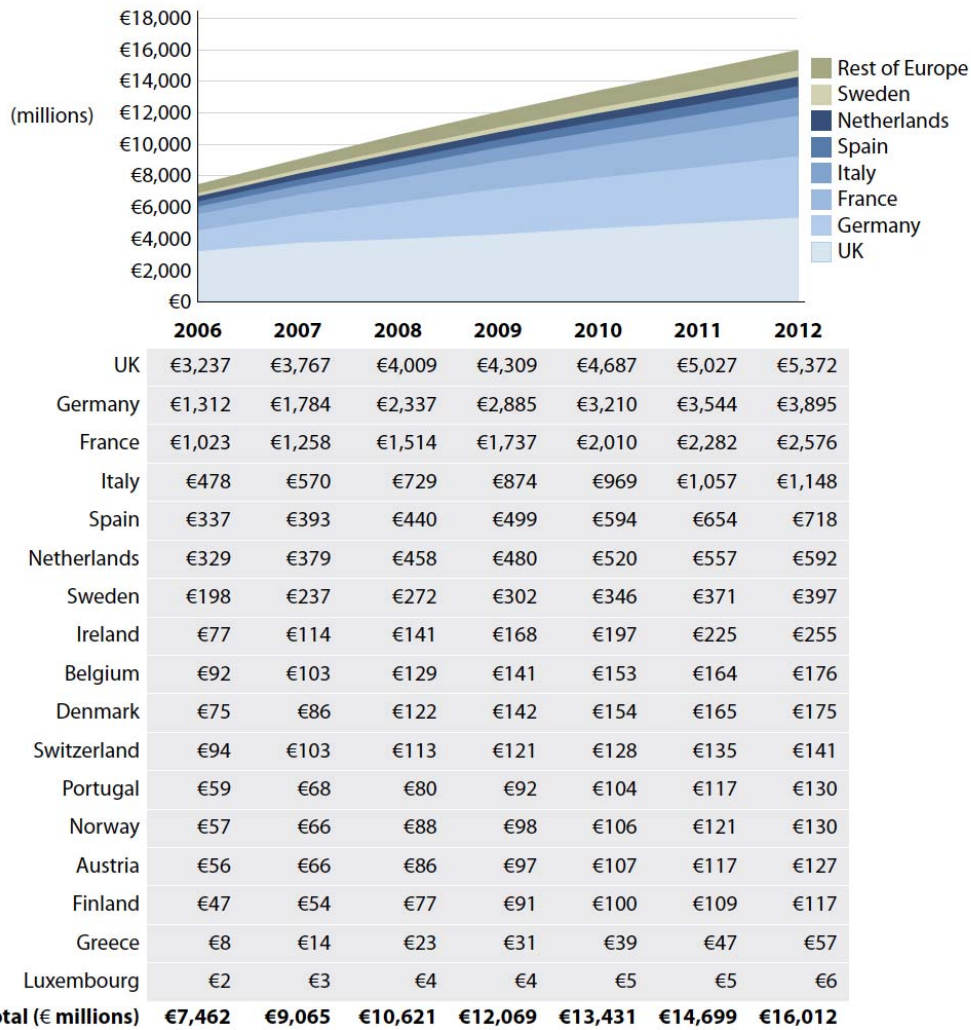
Figure 9 – Sport event process
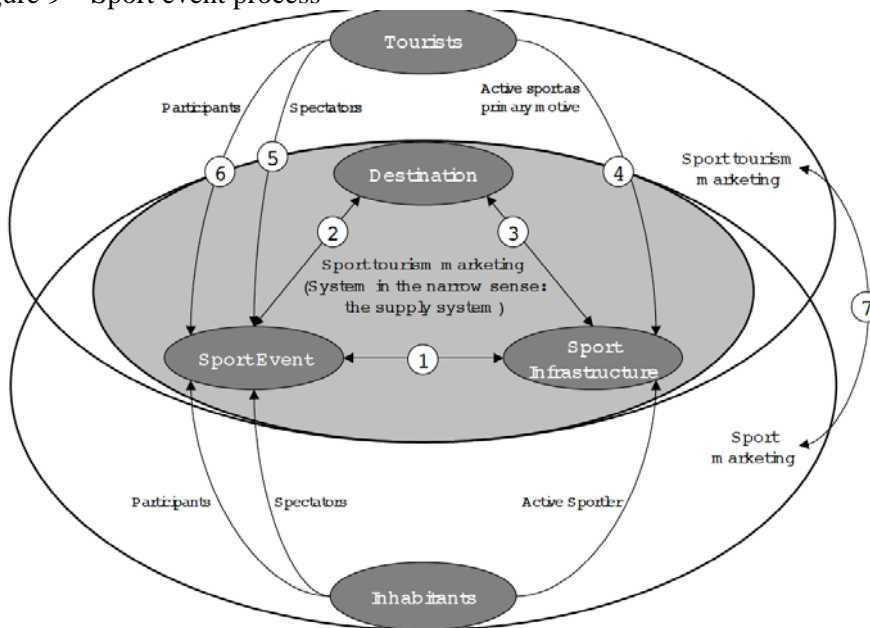
Source: Bieger (2007)

Table 1 – Internet Users in the European Union

Internet Users in the European Union

EUROPEAN UNION	Population (2011 Est.)	Internet Users, Latest Data	Penetration (% Population)	User Growth (2000-2011)	Users % Table
Austria	8,217,280	6,143,600	74.8 %	192.6 %	1.8 %
Belgium	10,431,477	8,113,200	77.8 %	305.7 %	2.4 %
Bulgaria	7,093,635	3,395,000	47.9 %	689.5 %	1.0 %
Cyprus	1,120,489	433,900	38.7 %	261.6 %	0.1 %
Czech Republic	10,190,213	6,680,800	65.6 %	568.1 %	2.0 %
Denmark	5,529,888	4,750,500	85.9 %	143.6 %	1.4 %
Estonia	1,282,963	971,700	75.7 %	165.1 %	0.3 %
Finland	5,259,250	4,480,900	85.2 %	132.5 %	1.3 %
France	62,102,719	45,262,000	69.5 %	432.5 %	13.4 %
Germany	81,471,834	65,125,000	79.9 %	171.4 %	19.2 %
Greece	10,760,136	4,970,700	46.2 %	397.1 %	1.5 %
Hungary	9,973,062	6,176,400	61.9 %	763.8 %	1.8 %
Ireland	4,670,976	3,042,600	65.1 %	288.1 %	0.9 %
Italy	61,016,804	30,026,400	49.2 %	127.5 %	8.9 %
Latvia	2,204,708	1,503,400	68.2 %	902.3 %	0.4 %
Lithuania	3,535,547	2,103,471	59.5 %	834.9 %	0.6 %
Luxembourg	503,302	424,500	84.3 %	324.5 %	0.1 %
Malta	408,333	240,600	58.9 %	501.5 %	0.1 %
Netherlands	16,847,007	14,872,200	88.3 %	281.3 %	4.4 %
Poland	38,441,588	22,452,100	58.4 %	701.9 %	6.6 %
Portugal	10,760,305	5,168,800	48.0 %	106.8 %	1.5 %
Romania	21,904,551	7,786,700	35.5 %	873.3 %	2.3 %
Slovakia	5,477,038	4,063,600	74.2 %	525.2 %	1.2 %
Slovenia	2,000,092	1,298,500	64.9 %	332.8 %	0.4 %
Spain	46,754,784	29,093,984	62.2 %	440.0 %	8.6 %
Sweden	9,088,728	8,397,900	92.4 %	107.5 %	2.5 %
United Kingdom	62,698,362	51,442,100	82.0 %	234.0 %	15.2 %
European Union	502,748,071	338,420,555	67.3 %	258.5 %	100.0 %

Source: Internet World Stats (http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats4.htm)

Table 2 –Evolution of online marketing expenditure in Europe, in million €

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
UK	€3,237	€3,767	€4,009	€4,309	€4,687	€5,027	€5,372
Germany	€1,312	€1,784	€2,337	€2,885	€3,210	€3,544	€3,895
France	€1,023	€1,258	€1,514	€1,737	€2,010	€2,282	€2,576
Italy	€478	€570	€729	€874	€969	€1,057	€1,148
Spain	€337	€393	€440	€499	€594	€654	€718
Netherlands	€329	€379	€458	€480	€520	€557	€592
Sweden	€198	€237	€272	€302	€346	€371	€397
Ireland	€77	€114	€141	€168	€197	€225	€255
Belgium	€92	€103	€129	€141	€153	€164	€176
Denmark	€75	€86	€122	€142	€154	€165	€175
Switzerland	€94	€103	€113	€121	€128	€135	€141
Portugal	€59	€68	€80	€92	€104	€117	€130
Norway	€57	€66	€88	€98	€106	€121	€130
Austria	€56	€66	€86	€97	€107	€117	€127
Finland	€47	€54	€77	€91	€100	€109	€117
Greece	€8	€14	€23	€31	€39	€47	€57
Luxembourg	€2	€3	€4	€4	€5	€5	€6
Total (€ millions)	€7,462	€9,065	€10,621	€12,069	€13,431	€14,699	€16,012

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 13 – Online vs. All media advertising growth in Europe, in percentage
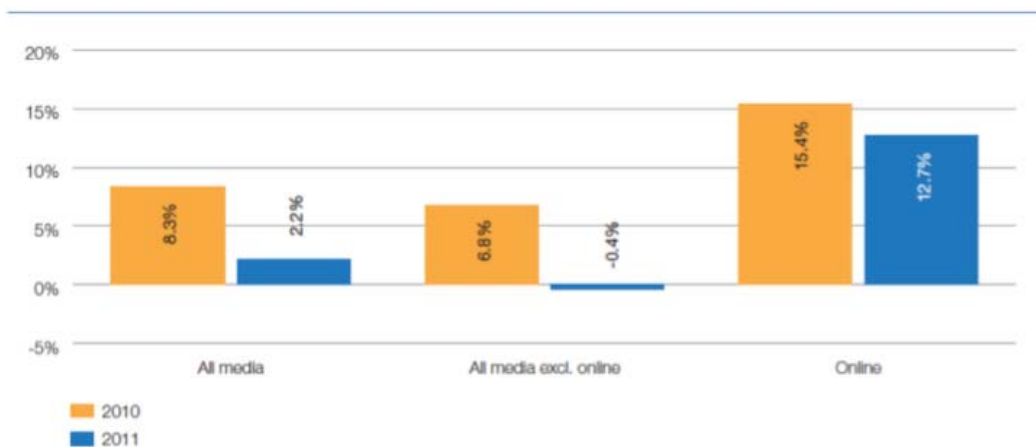
Source: IHS Screen Digest

Figure 18 – Website of Visit Copenhagen
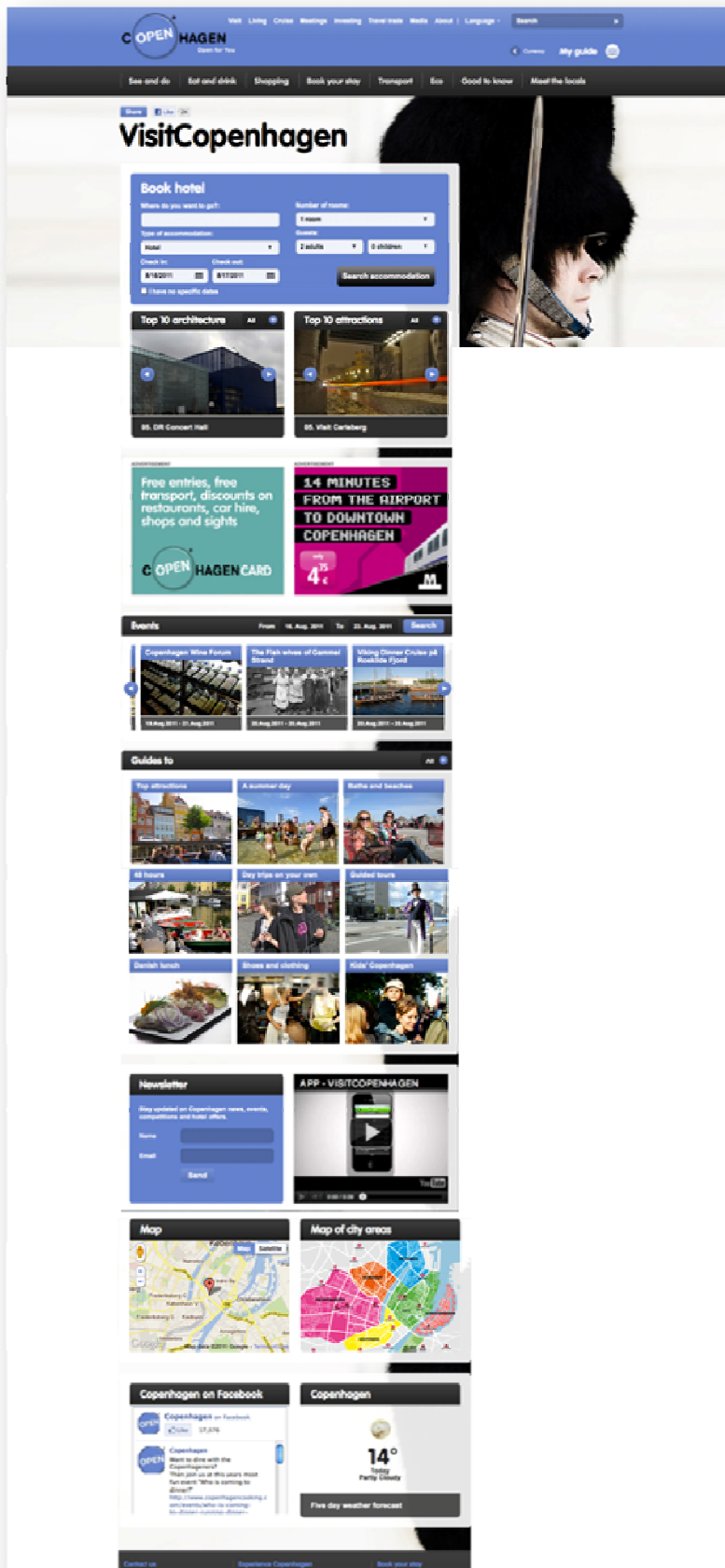
Source: www.visitcopenhagen.com

Figure 20 - Different visual identities of "c OPEN hagen"

Figure 21 – "MyGuide" section of www.visitcopenhagen.com
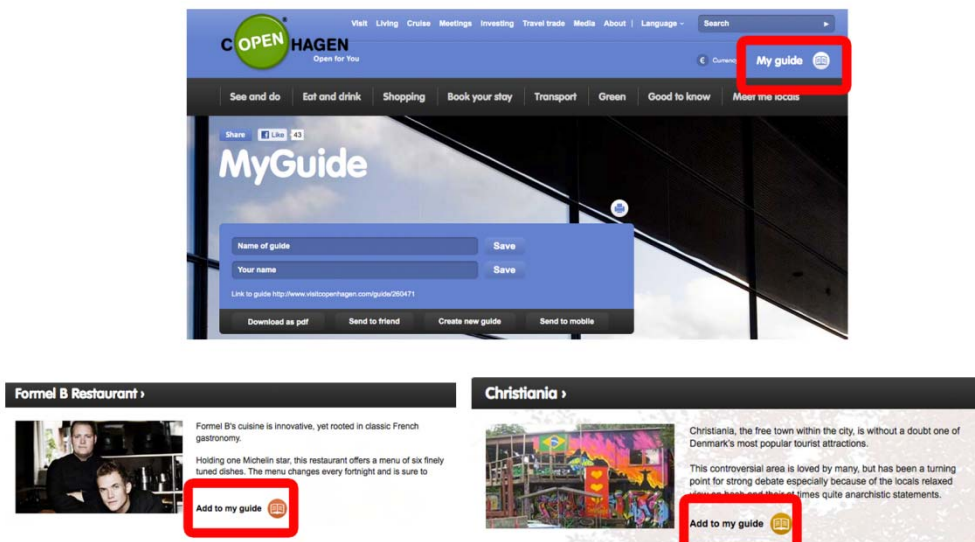
Source: www.visitcopenhagen.com

Figure 22 - Facebook page of visitcopenhagen.com

Source: http://www.facebook.com/VisitCopenhagen

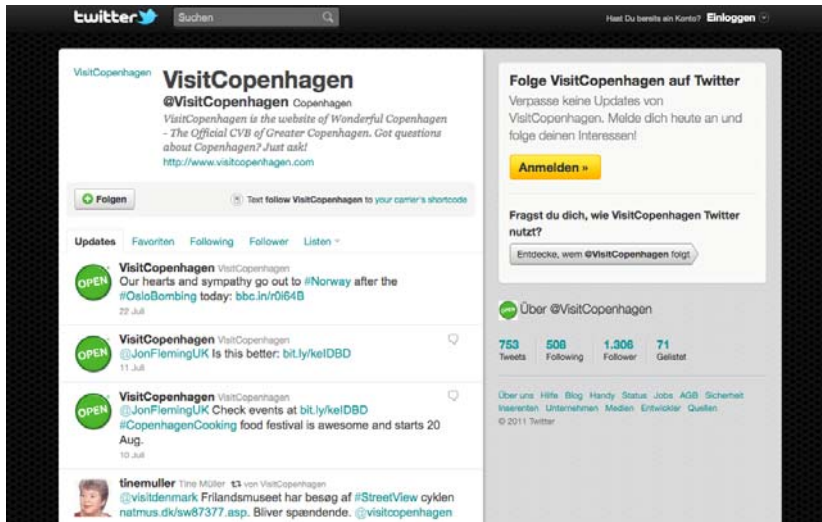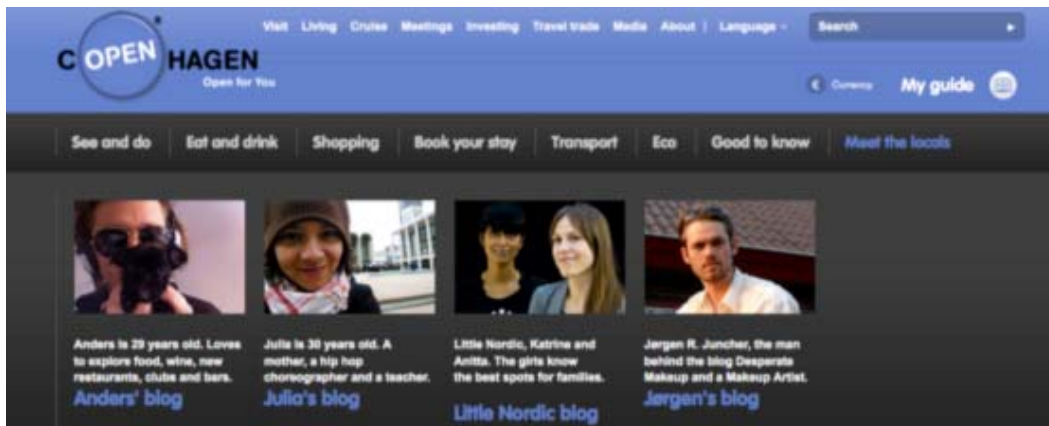Figure 23 - Deactivated Twitter account of visitcopenhagen.com

Figure 24 – You Tube channel of visitcopenhagen.com

Source: http://www.youtube.com/user/WonderfulCopenhagen

Figure 25 - Bloggers of visitcopenhagen.com

Source: www.visitcopenhagen.com

Figure 28 - Website www.praguewelcome.cz
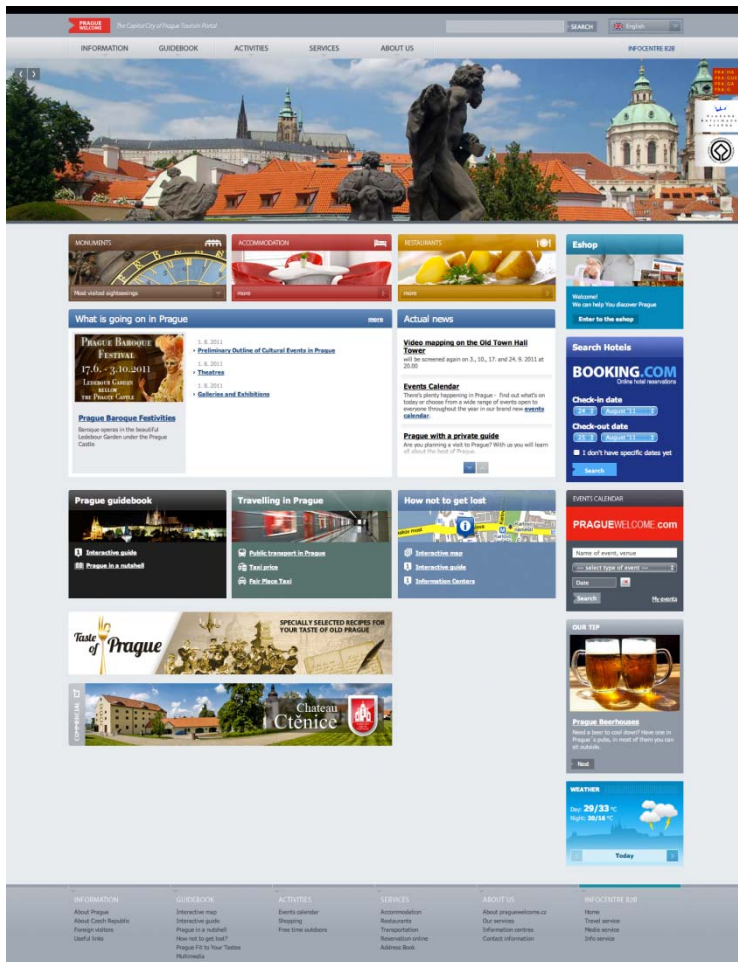
Figure 30 – Day trip recommendations for City Breaks
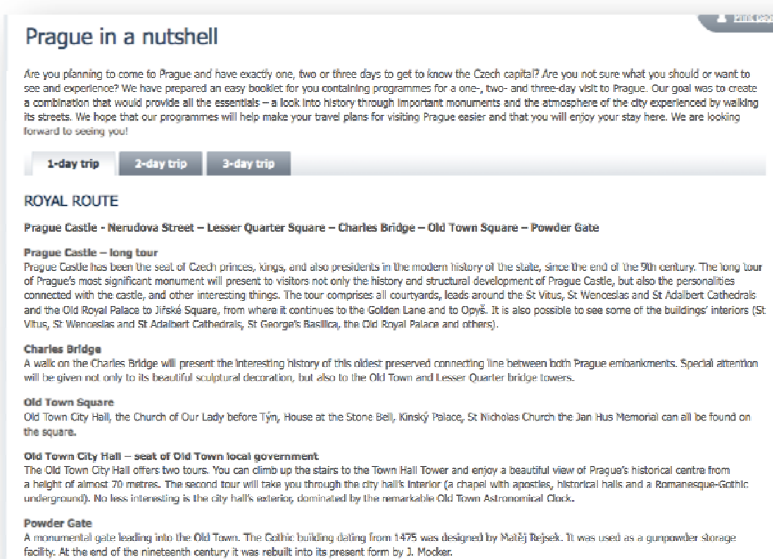
Source: www.visitcopenhagen.com

Figure 32 - Facebook page of Praguewelcome

Source: http://www.facebook.com/pages/Praguewelcomecz/342551825445

Figure 34 - You Tube channel of praguewelcome.cz
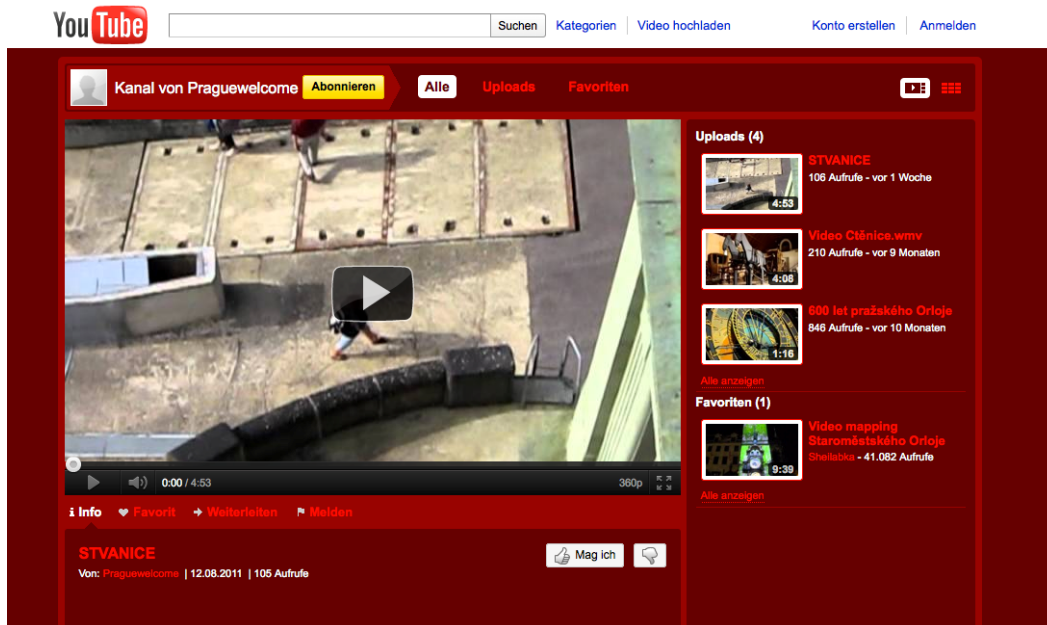
Source: http://www.youtube.com/user/praguewelcome

Figure 36 - Website of Iamsterdam
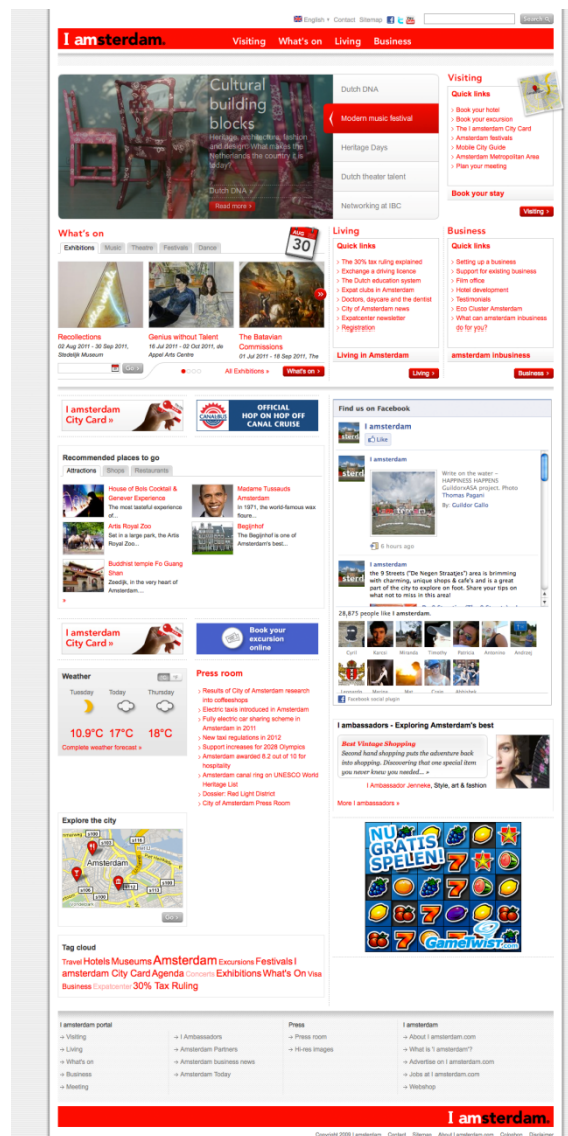
Figure 38 – Iamsterdam Web shop
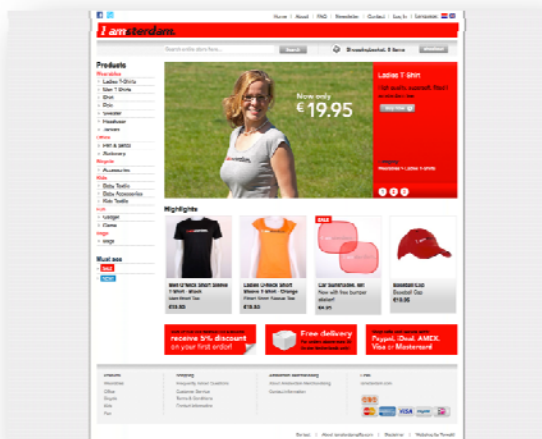
Figure 39 - Facebook page of Iamsterdam

Source: http://www.facebook.com/iamsterdam

Figure 40 - Twitter channel of Iamsterdam
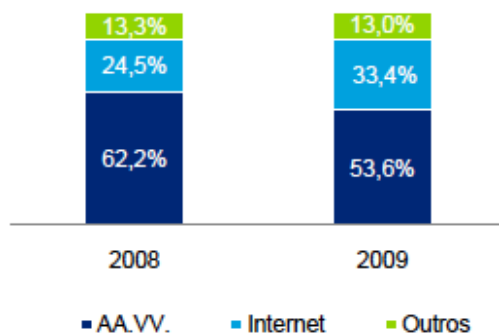

Source: http://twitter.com/#!/Iamsterdam
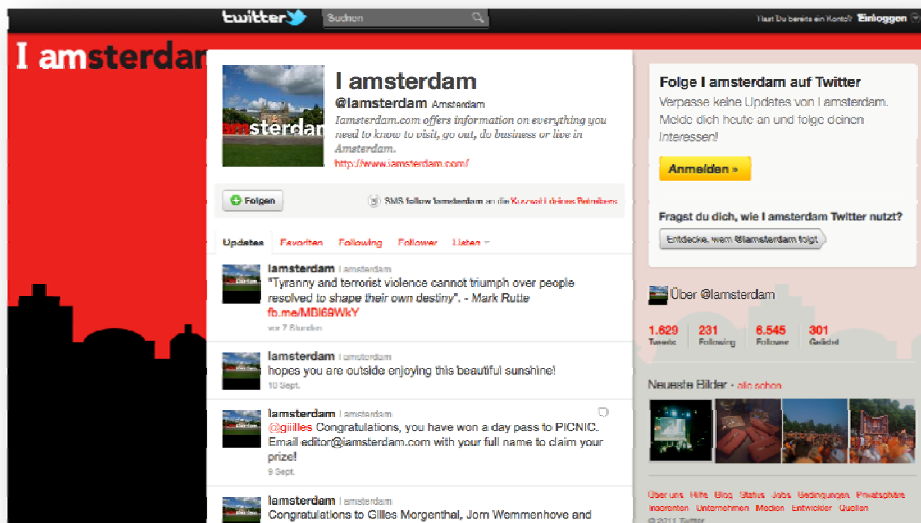
Figure 42 - iPhone app of Iamsterdam
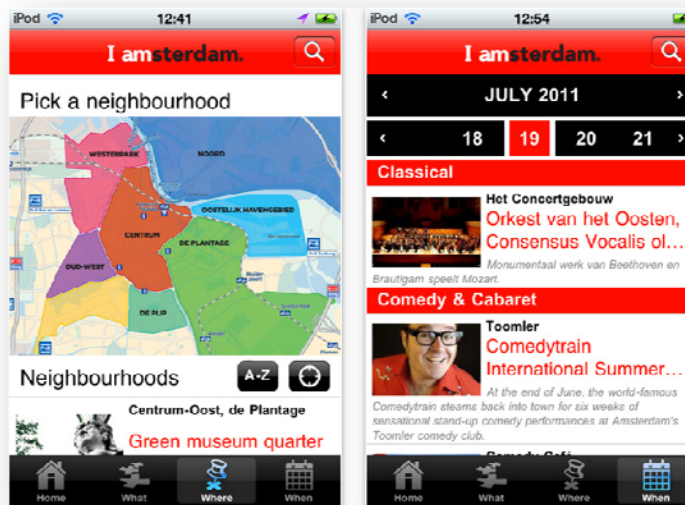
Source: www.iamsterdam.com

Figure 43 – Forms of trip reservation to Lisbon, in percentage

Source: Deloitte, 2010

Figure 45 – Investments in by tourism products and target countries 2010, in thousand Euros

| Mercados emissores	Marca	%	City & Short Breaks	%	MI	%	Golfe	%	Touring	%	Acções Tácticas	%	Outros	%	Total	%
Espanha	190,0	15,5%	114,0	9,3%	149,0	12,2%	1,0	0,1%	270,0	22,1%	-	-	500,0	40,8%	1.224,0	15,6%
Alemanha	316,0	44,2%	132,0	18,5%	192,0	26,9%	75,0	10,5%	-	-	-	-	-	-	715,0	9,1%
Reino Unido/ Irlanda	256,0	40,2%	122,0	19,2%	92,0	14,4%	142,0	22,3%	25,0	3,9%	-	-	-	-	637,0	8,1%
França	182,0	41,3%	83,0	18,8%	32,0	7,3%	-	-	144,0	32,7%	-	-	-	-	441,0	5,6%
Brasil	30,0	8,6%	20,0	5,7%	0,0	0,0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	300,0	85,7%	350,0	4,5%
Itália	182,0	59,5%	107,0	35,0%	17,0	5,6%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	306,0	3,9%
Holanda/ Bélgica	55,0	20,7%	91,0	34,3%	27,0	10,2%	67,5	25,4%	25,0	9,4%	-	-	-	-	265,5	3,4%
Escandinávia	-	-	80,0	34,4%	2,0	0,9%	150,5	64,7%	-	-	-	-	-	-	232,5	3,0%
Rússia e Países de Leste	100,0	52,1%	47,0	24,5%	20,0	10,4%	-	-	25,0	13,0%	-	-	-	-	192,0	2,5%
EUA	-	-	-	-	144,0	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	144,0	1,8%
Multimercados/ Outros	634,0	19,1%	639,0	19,2%	401,5	12,1%	164,0	4,9%	111,0	3,3%	221,8	6,7%	1.150,0	34,6%	3.321,3	42,4%
Total	1.945,0	24,8%	1.435,0	18,3%	1.076,5	13,8%	600,0	7,7%	600,0	7,7%	221,8	2,8%	1.950,0	24,9%	7.828,3	100%

Source: Deloitte, 2010

Figure 46 - Website of Visitlisboa
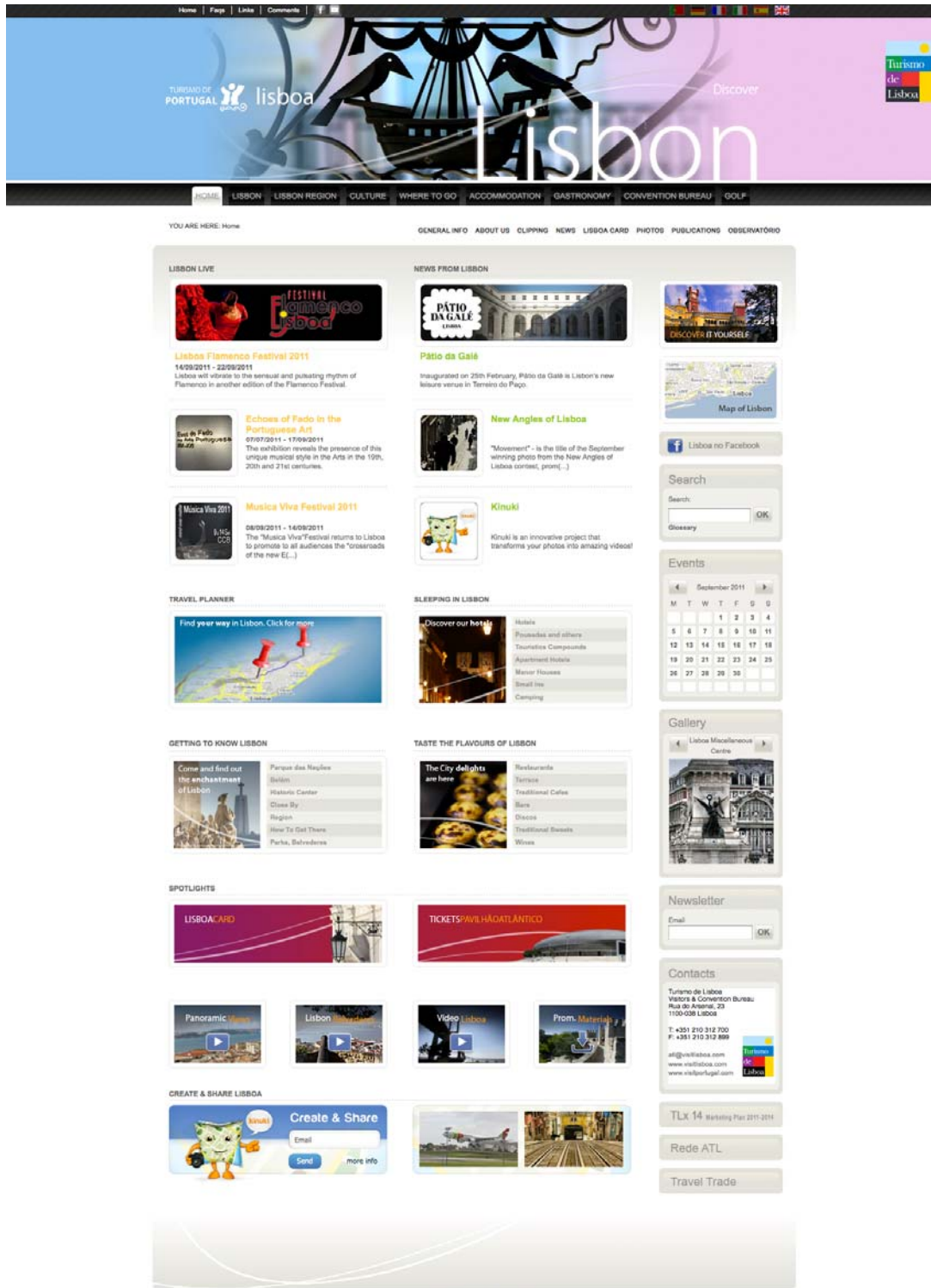
Source: www.visitlisboa.com

Figure 48 - Facebook page of Visit Lisboa

Source: http://www.facebook.com/visitlisboa
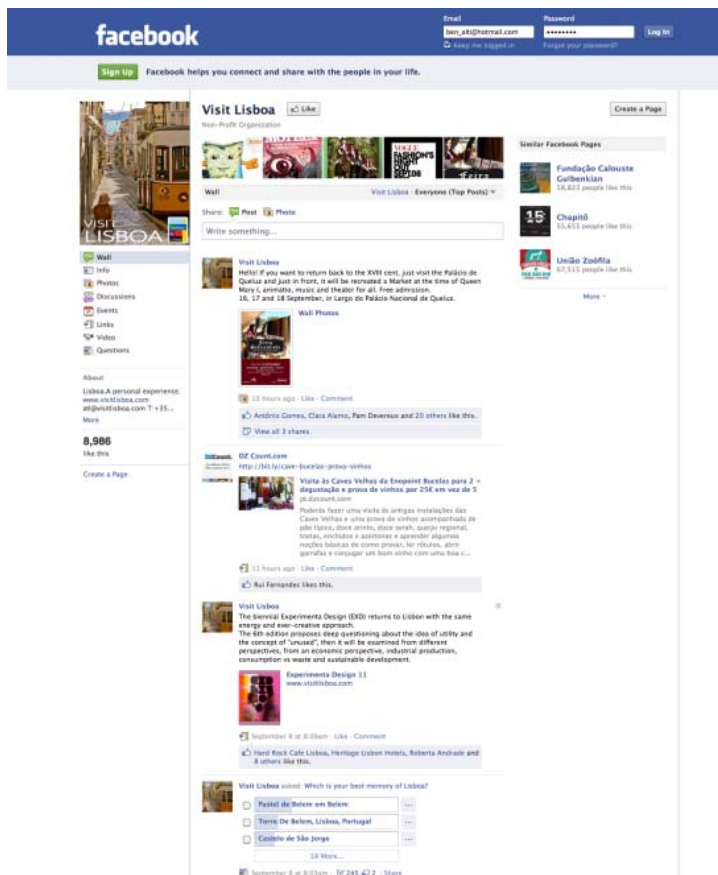
Figure 52 – Visitor numbers of Lisbon 2010

	Valor	Variação %	
Espanha	1.266.055	7,2%	▲
Alemanha	517.098	6,8%	▲
Reino Unido e Irlanda	415.465	8,9%	▲
Itália	433.975	8,3%	▲
França	502.768	2,3%	▲
Bélgica e Holanda	361.139	1,6%	▲
EUA	358.259	16,1%	▲
Brasil	534.675	42,5%	▲

Source: INE via Lisbon's observatory of Tourism, 2011