

**THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA:
CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH**

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**L'ATTRACTIVITE DES TERRITOIRES A L'ERE DU DIGITAL : CAS DE LA
VILLE DE MARRAKECH**

MOHCINE ANFOUD

PhD Researcher, Mohammed V University of Rabat, Morocco

Mohcine.anfoud@um5s.net.ma

KHADDOUJ KARIM

Professor of Higher Education at Mohammed V University of Rabat,
Morocco

karim.khaddouj@um5s.net.ma

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**THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA:
CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH****ABSTRACT**

Convinced of the importance of relevant communication through the web, the city of Marrakech under the direction of its regional tourism council, embarked on the path of territorial marketing on the internet via its website, Facebook page, application mobile and more. This work examines the contribution of digital technology in improving the attractiveness of territories based on number data from two studies, the first is qualitative with the Deputy Director of the Regional Council of Tourism of Marrakech and the second is quantitative nearby 350 tourists having visited the city of Marrakech during the period August 2016-August 2017.

KEY WORDS: Territorial marketing, Territory, Attractiveness, digital, tourist destination

RESUME

Convaincu de l'importance d'une communication pertinente à travers le web, la ville de Marrakech sous la direction de son conseil régional du tourisme, s'est engagée dans la voie du marketing territorial sur internet via son site web, page Facebook, application mobile et plus encore. Le présent travail s'interroge sur la contribution du digital dans l'amélioration de l'attractivité des territoires en s'appuyant sur des données issues de deux études, la première est qualitative auprès du Directeur Adjoint du Conseil Régional du Tourisme de Marrakech et la deuxième est quantitative auprès de 350 touristes ayant visité la ville de Marrakech durant la période août 2016- août 2017.

MOTS CLES : Marketing territorial, Territoire, Attractivité, digital, destination touristique

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

INTRODUCTION

What to do in a globalized and competitive context to defend its attractiveness? What can you do to stand out from your competitors? How to attract more tourists? Faced with these questions, territorial marketing offers decision-makers a global approach that makes it possible to enhance the attractiveness factors of cities, inter-municipalities, departments, regions or cities (Noisette and yallerur, 1999). The practice of territorial marketing makes it possible to provide methods, tools and practices which are particularly useful for improving the attractiveness of a territory. By adopting a territorial marketing strategy, local authorities will build new representations of their territory and consequently develop a collective identity, strong relationships between stakeholders and brand equity. Borrowed from the business world, it is an adequate tool for the promotion of the territory and therefore for its sale. Territorial marketing is part of a global community strategy. Often driven by a political will, it contributes to the development and enrichment of the territory. This is about using the techniques of commercial action to promote the territory.

Development strategies for a territory are more complex to implement for the public sector than for the private sector, which mainly aims for economic profitability objectives. Public strategies must take into account multiple aspects such as the history and culture, the morphological characteristics of a site, all that constitutes the originality and specificity of a place as well as its power of attraction on people and about activities.

Territorial marketing, as this concept should be called, is inspired by the methods traditionally used by marketing Digital technologies, in strong development, occupy a preponderant place in this strategy More and more present on digital media, and in particular on social networks, communities are professionalizing their approach to digital marketing. In times of budgetary restraint, they must also take strategic turns by giving themselves the means to act effectively to obtain results that meet their expectations.

In this perspective, the territorial managers are invited to identify their elements of differentiation vis-à-vis their competitors, whether in terms of prices and qualities specific, they must adjust and propose an adapted offer to be able to communicate their distinctive

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

character and their competitive advantages in order to be considered during choice of their targets. In other words, the regions which do not communicate today are likely to remain in general indifference.

To help them in their decision-making, new methods have emerged, it is at this time, that the marketing tools have adapted to the constraints relating to the territory And this is where digital has managed to carve out the lion's share in territorial marketing strategies with tourism as the spearhead, your theme on the web for a long time (Cities, departments and regions) are on trend and are now using digital media to boost their seductions.

Today, digital is present everywhere has changed our daily lives, both for professionals as for the public, it targets everyone. The power of the digital paradigm undoubtedly derives from the synergy that it operates between dimensions hitherto exploded in the technical, political, economic or philosophical world (Breton and Proulx, 1996). The tourism sector is not spared, it is the first area impacted by information and communication technologies. The tourism industry has gradually opened up to the digital environment, thus integrating new needs with new consumer uses in customer communication and information strategies. Faced with the growing use of tablets and smartphones in the age of booking and preparing travel tours, it is crucial for managers to stay alert and adapt to new information technologies in order to offer solutions matching consumer expectations.

With travelers ever more connected, the arrival of generation Y on the tourist market and a strong increase in the use of Internet on mobile, it was necessary that the tourist site operated a mutation and depth to be able to continue to fast mobility instant personalization are today the key words of an effective tourist operation Smartphones have become essential tools for 1 organization of a trip in short to put them aside in a marketing strategy the number of mobile applications dates to travel and tourism m and the proof.

There is a real card to play here, and that is why we chose our theme: the attractiveness of territories in the digital era: the case of the city of Marrakech. The question to which we hope to provide some answers and the following

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

What is the contribution of digital in improving the attractiveness of the city of Marrakech?

To answer our problematic, we will borrow the following plan. First, we will approach the conceptual and theoretical framework focusing on the role of digital in order to understand the contribution in improving the attractiveness of territories. In the second place, an empirical study will be content to examine the results which result from it through a qualitative and quantitative approach aiming to measure this relation.

I. DIGITAL AS A LEVER OF TERRITORIAL ATTRACTIVENESS

With the advent of the internet, marketing has been able to develop rapidly on this medium and occupy a dominant position in the strategies of the territories. Technological trends are forcing territories to adopt new modes of management and governance. A conscience that leads us on our part to deepen the notion of digital and its relationship with territorial attractiveness.

1. THE DIGITAL STRATEGY AT THE HEART OF THE MARKETING OF TERRITORIES

1.1. WHAT IS DIGITAL MARKETING?

Consumers, more and more connected, demand instant and speed. In this sense digital predominates in the development of travel. This is why all of the territories have every interest in integrating the digital dimension into their marketing strategy. We can define digital marketing as "all of the marketing activities of an organization carried out through the use of digital channels (website, email, social media, mobile application) to sell, communicate and promote a product. or of a territory "(Scheil. Vaillant, De Montaigu. 2014).

Like any marketing activity, digital brings up the concept of value creation. This term is defined as the contribution made by digital marketing activities to business carried out on digital channels (Scheil. Vaillant De Montage 2014, p 9). For example, "value creation for a ski resort would be the difference between the money it spends to boost and increase the reach of these publications with the number of back on these.

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

1.2. THE THREE BIG PRINCIPLES OF DIGITAL

To generate value, the marketing strategy is based on three actions intervening at several levels of the value chain, notably in marketing and sales.

Attractiveness: this concept consists in generating and attracting traffic to the website by adopting a Pull approach, attracting the prospect to the product or brand, in which we want them to be interested. We find two strategies: the acquisition strategy which generates a cost directly linked to the traffic or value obtained and the generation strategy. The latter is represented by actions that take place over time and have no direct cost to traffic or the value obtained. It is generally used for Branding strategies.

Conversion: the goal is to convert the prospect into a customer by transforming traffic into value. To do this, the brand must minimize the bounce rates in order to consume on its site. The more the content will reveal the conversion, the more confidence the site will inspire, the more it will meet the needs and the greater the conversion.

Loyalty: is to keep the value earned previously. This loyalty is essential to reduce the attrition rate (lost Internet user), generating a new implication over time.

These 3 actions are essential elements in digital marketing; they actively participate in the referencing of the site and increase its visibility on the Web.

2. THE WEBSITE AND SOCIAL NETWORKS AS TOOLS TO IMPROVE ATTRACTIVENESS

2.1. THE WEBSITE

The website is gradually establishing itself as a fundamental communication tool, both towards the exterior (companies, general public) and within the network it allows the provision of a complete and homogeneous set of information concerning both the overall characteristics of the territory, the opportunities offered at sectorial and regional levels, elements relating to taxation, business and labor law, description of support systems, etc. (Hatem, 2004).

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

Convinced of the importance of relevant communication through the web, the territory embarked on the path of territorial marketing on the internet via the creation of websites allowing ease of access to information for Internet users on one side, and on the other side the attractiveness of the territory through a modern and dynamic image of the territory.

The launch of a website of the same name as the city brand of the territory as the example of “Casablanca” is a strategic choice which aims to create synergy between the different communication media and thus a good positioning with Internet users. citizens, businesses, tourists, researchers, etc.) The website provides Internet users with information, both institutional (major projects in the territory, missions and actions of local authorities.) as well as practical. (agenda of events, video library, etc.). May also contain useful links for mini-tourist sites, thematic sectoral sites, interactive map of the region, TV and Radio spaces, spaces for dialogue and exchange. which aims to improve the participatory approach.

2.2. Social networks

« Social media impose themselves by their strong penetration among Internet users, by their interactive uses, by the ytrality of exchanges » (Dublanchet, 2012, p24)

Social networks are new tools at the service of regions. They allow Internet users to connect with their friends (social graph). relationships in order to create a private and or professional relational network Little by little this type of tool has developed to allow an exchange of content (audio, video, photo, summer files) an exchange of applications (Vidjeti), monitoring of activities and especially the possibility of creating and integrating groups according to common centers of interest of common cultures, common opinions or common lifestyles. (Barabel. Mayol, Meier 2010)

A direct link between the website and social networks represents an added value for the territory, quality content created on an official website and shared on an official Facebook page allows to strengthen the brand image of the territory, to develop notoriety and increase the attractiveness of the territory. On the other hand, poor quality content leads to incorrect positioning in the minds of internet users.

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

II. CONTENT AND REFERENCING AT THE SERVICE OF VISIBILITY AND E-REPUTATION

1. REPUTATION AT DIGITAL TIME

Each territory had a value perceived in the minds of its clienteles. For this value to exist, it is also necessary that there be a notoriety, that is to say an existence, in the minds of these customers. To build notoriety, strengthening your image leads to your long-term reputation. Marketers will set up brand policies to exist in the minds of the targets and be deemed attractive. Before developing a brand strategy, small towns should rather seek to foster the development of a clear image of their town with local players (Alais, 2015).

The e-reputation is none other than the reputation in the digital Internet era materializes this sharing of reputational assets which intervenes in the transactions between the company and its stakeholders who express themselves prescribed criticize its brands, its services , his social, societal behavior, management, etc. in blogs, online media, forums, wikis or social networks Internet allows to assess the reputational assets of most known brands, because it is at the intersection information flows and channels It is both a place of analysis and a space for manufacturing or destroying the reputation of a brand. Even if all the signs emitted by a brand are not present, the analysis of the digital reputation gives a fairly good assessment of the reputation of a brand. Reputation is therefore not an image conveyed by a brand on all types of digital media (E.Fillia and A.Villeneuve. 2009), but the digital component of its reputation, the two can be confused.

2. DIGITAL CONTENT: A STRATEGIC ELEMENT OF TERRITORIAL MARKETING

It is important to disseminate content with high added value which is useful by offering practical information, stories (storytelling), guarantees and measures to provide and add value to the life cycles of the traveler by doing so. " inform the Orient, reassure him, decide to have him buy, have him testify and recommend him.

This content must be able to adapt to the whole platform to build a real multi canal strategy and To be relevant, it will have to respond to a reader problem (DAUM I 2015) According to Thomas YUNG, Webmarketing & E-reputation expert for hoteliers, the quality of digital

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

content is important in brand marketing strategy. Feeds digital identity and natural referencing through subtle and natural keywords in order to enhance the visibility of the pages of the site.

3. REFERENCING: SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING (SEM)

Natural referencing called SEO Search Engine Optimization "is the set of practices put in copper on its website, to optimize the content and guarantee good readability on search engines. We distinguish three approaches to SEO: the "On Site" referencing, mentioned above based on the content strategy, the "On Page" referencing, corresponding to the optimization of pages by the use of tags and relevant domain names. Finally, the SEO of Site "which is the link strategy The aim of the latter is to obtain qualified inbound links from Backlinks Plus the site has backlinks to institutional sites, directories, social networks. And the more traffic generated on the site will be important

The paid referencing as. Google Adwords called SEA "Search Engine Advertising, consists in buying advertising spaces containing sponsored or commercial links qualified of" Search> We can speak about online advertising for the techniques of SEA Whoever pays the most, will be offered places in top of list

III. M-TOURISM: A COMPLEMENTARY VISIBILITY CHANNEL FOR THE TERRITORY

1. MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

The change in consumer behavior, which has become nomadic and hyper-connected, is prompting regions to use mobile phones to complete their communication strategy and to respond to customers who seek instant information. The "M tourism, democratized with the rise of smartphones and tablets, allows tourists to access information via these different tools, where its objective is to provide additional information compared to other media while making it attractive. Its purpose is to increase the marketing and visibility of the brand's territory.

With the development of the mobile and all its functionalities, the modes of tourism consumption have changed. Henceforth, the whole population uses mobile before, during and

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

after the stay. During the life cycle of the traveler, the mobile takes place in each of the stages. Before the stay, the prospect will mainly use it to reserve and download documentation such as tourist guides, maps.

During the stay, the mobile will fill this need to be reassured. It is important to optimize your vacation time as much as possible so as not to waste time. For example, the mobile, thanks to the geolocation system will be used not to get lost, to quickly find an address, but also to have practical information such as timetables or weather, essential for the duration of the stay, The mobile is used largely during the stay by "mobile users" to consult social networks and 70% of them share their experiences.

Figure 1: Applications and features most often used by travelers



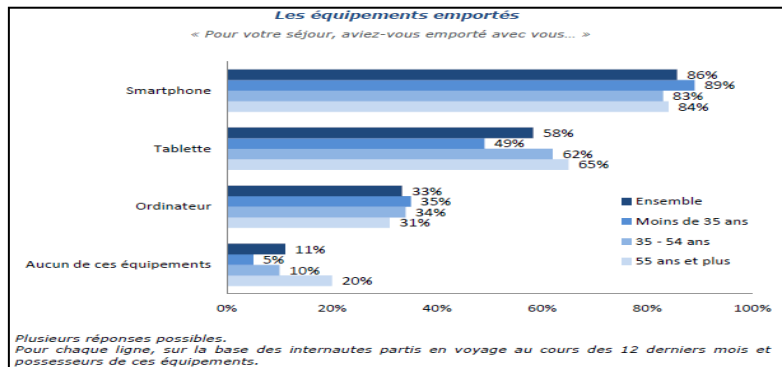
Source: Expedia/Egencia Mobile Index 2014

The mobile does not only accompany the reservation, on the contrary. It becomes a real travel companion, since 86% of travelers with a smartphone take it with them. And they stay connected: 73% through the wifi network of their place of accommodation, 53% via a local 3G / 4G network and 33% via the wifi network of public places.

Suffice to say that WiFi is becoming an essential criterion for choosing a hotel (CCM Benchmark Institut, 2013).

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

Figure 2: Equipment carried during the trip



Source: Study on "Tourism & Mobile - Uses, the point of view on new services", CCM
Benchmark Institute, 2013

2. M-TOURISM, ENRICHMENT STRATEGIES FOR TOURIST OFFERS

Botti et al. (2008) considering that a given place becomes a tourist product from the moment that tourists move there. From a theoretical point of view, it is possible to justify such a rapprochement by mobilizing the notion of defined tourist destination, by Eramke (2002). As a geographical area that is able to offer a tourist product, that is to say a set of support services that revolve around activities or experiences that are unusual for the tourist. In this definition, the destination appears as a composite good made up of all the amenities necessary for the comfort of the tourist during his stay (accommodation, transport ...), and a tourist attraction. The m-tourism services can be assimilated to secondary or peripheral attributes, that is to say non-essential elements in the resolution of the customer's problem. This type of attribute does not contribute to satisfying the basic requirements of individuals (Brechan. 2006), but represent real challenges in terms of differentiation of supply. The secondary or peripheral nature of the attribute, adds to a multi-attribute (complex) tourist offer, reinforces its relevance. Indeed, such an additional service can significantly modify the behavior and attitude of tourists towards a city, by adopting a clear strategy and offering rich content.

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To provide elements of response to our problem, we opted for a composite study which contains a qualitative study and a quantitative study whose methodology is adopted for each study in this section.

1. METHODOLOGY OF THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

A semi-directive interview guide dedicated to the Deputy Director of CRT-Marrakech whose assigned objective is to have feedback in terms of observations linked to actions carried out with regard to the integration of digital within the council's strategy regional tourism.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

The objective of this study is to know the impact and importance of the presence of a destination on the web from the point of view of the consumer or the tourist and to know if the digital really meets the expectations of tourists.

A quantitative study was conducted among tourists who have already visited the city of

Our questionnaire was distributed on the said target, via the social network facebook, where we interviewed a sample of 500 tourists, during the period from July 03 to August 04, 2017, from which we were able to identify 350 responses adapted to our target which are tourists who have visited Marrakech in the last 12 months.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

The exchange which took place with the Deputy Director of the CRT allowed us to discover the digital marketing strategy adopted and the tools used for the promotion of the city of Marrakech

Indeed, digital constitutes an upheaval of the entire ecosystem of tourism stakeholders and involves awareness and mobilization of all stakeholders. The CRT of Marrakech is involved in the life of territorial marketing on the Internet via the website “www.visitmarrakech.ma. This site, ergonomic and easy to use, is proof that the CRT relies heavily on NICTs to reach its

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

targets and seeks to give a modern and dynamic image of the city. To improve and broaden its offer, the CRT-Marrakech has adopted a gradual use of web2.0 technology and implemented new functionalities: A mobile application: Visit Marrakech; A Facebook page;

2. RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Understanding the contribution of digital to improving the attractiveness of regions is the major concern of our study. Our objective was to show that digital represents the opportunity and the only force capable of improving the attractiveness of a territory in a globalized and more competitive context.

Sexe		Origin		Age		
Man	Women	Moroccan	foreigners	18-26years old	26-45years old	More than 45years old
56%	44%	82%	18%	64%	29%	7%

The tool most used by respondents is the smartphone with a percentage of 46.8%, just after the computer with a percentage of 31%.

51.7% of respondents use digital to search for practical information, 30.3% to make online reservations and 18% to organize their trips.

82% of those questioned indicate that they use digital tools to guide their choice of tourist destination while 12 do not use these means.

54.7% of those questioned use digital tools before the stay, 39% during the stay and 6.3% after the stay.

61% of respondents have already submitted a review on a tourist destination after having stayed there, however 39% have never left a review on their destination after having stayed there.

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

Over all of the respondents, more than 66% consider that online services are essential for each tourist destination (38% agree and 29% strongly agree), while 33% say no. importance of these services.

To the question of the contribution of digital to improving the attractiveness of the destination tourism, more than 90% believe that digital contributes to the improvement of attractiveness, 39% of which totally agree and 31% agree, while only 9% of tourists questioned think that digital has no effect on improving attractiveness.

3. DISCUSSION

According to the results of our qualitative survey, tourism managers are working to improve visibility of their offer. Beyond an improvement of the home page of the site and a more specific personalization of the offer, one of the main levers goes through work on social networks according to the respondent, through the increased production of content and the animation of communities, mainly Facebook and Instagram. Note that this visibility is being developed through the adoption of new languages and the continuous updating of the mobile application Tuttarakech w in order to meet the needs some tourists.

A second study was conducted with a sample of 350 tourists, 82% Moroccans and 18% foreigners, who have visited the city of Marrakech in the past 12 months.

According to the results of our study, 79% of tourists use digital tools to guide their choice of tourist destination before the stay, more than 56% of the tourists use it during the stay and 32% of the tourists after the stay.

The result of our study is very positive by comparing it with the result of another study by CCM Benchmark Institute in 2013 on Tourism & Mobile - Uses, the point of view on new services "in which Mobile does not accompany not just the reservation, quite the contrary. It becomes a real travel companion, since 86% of travelers with a smartphone take it with them

We note that the impact of the digitalization of a tourist destination mainly involves the transformation of the customer journey, the visitor starts their tourist experience even before

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

their arrival. Faced with rich and abundant information, it is possible for him to seek opinions on tourist destinations by browsing the Internet, consulting the official sites of the destinations, choosing the offers and comparing the best prices on the mobile applications (Booking. Trivago). This travel preparation time is not limited to the search for practical information, it is also dedicated to locating the different places of the desired destination using GPS (Google Maps) During the stay and after the stay the visitor will give opinions on his stay and share his experience on social networks (Facebook and Instagram) which constitute major channels for the promotion of the destination. By taking advantage of these tools, the tourist destination is now brought to worry about the image of the territory conveyed on social networks (e-reputation) which is built through comments and messages published by Internet users.

The image and notoriety of the destination go largely through the experience lived by the customer. This experience is posted online, commented, compared, shared, accessible to any Internet user who is also a potential customer. Tourist destinations have become aware of the impact of this online reputation and it's potential. So the challenge is to maintain its presence on the web by producing quality content, circulating information, promoting and referencing new content and news, maintaining relationships with Internet users, but also responses to their requests.

Going back to the concept of content quality, according to Thomas YUNG The quality of digital content is important in brand marketing strategy. It fuels identitydigital and natural referencing thanks to keywords repeated in a subtle and natural way to enhance visibility.

We also note that digital is perceived by our target population as an important and essential tool in 1 improving the attractiveness of territories and this is reflected in the percentages identified during our quantitative study which always exceeds 60% for choices (Okay and totally agree). As our sample is aware of the importance of this tool by answering the major question of our study (**Can digital help improve the attractiveness of a tourist destination?**) More than 31% of our sample are agree and 59% strongly agree, the fact which means that this element has become essential and can play a very important role for the territories and

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

especially for the tourist destinations like our case of the city of Marrakech by taking advantage of its national and international positioning to improve its attractiveness with digital help.

According to ScheilVaillant, De Montaigu, (2014), digital marketing is all of the marketing activities of an organization, carried out through the use of digital channels (website, email, social media, and mobile application) to communicate and promote a product or territory”

In this context, it should be noted that if digital is an interesting tool for bringing together a large number of people, it would be misleading to believe that the simple opening of a Facebook page will boost the reputation of a territory. You shouldn't go on social media because everyone does, but you have to rely on and arm yourself with a solid and thoughtful strategy. That said, Territorial marketing must be an approach of global attractiveness.

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

CONCLUSION

Faced with an increasingly tough competition for the attractiveness of territories, and as long as resources do not exist independently of existing strategies, local authorities must define marketing strategies intended to increase their market share compared to competing territories. This process mobilizes tools that have points in common with corporate marketing, but also specificities linked to the nature of the product offered (a complex territorial offer) and of the client (tourist, business, citizen).

Each territory seeks to differentiate itself, to become or to remain attractive. Gold Tourism represents one of the major forces of attractiveness of the territories and, consequently, a powerful lever of their economic development. It is also a sector where the digital plays a determining role. Digital uses are multiplying and creating new practices, new needs and new consumption patterns. This is why, all the territories have every interest in integrating the digital dimension into their marketing strategy.

In the digital age, the territory is increasingly becoming a virtual territory based on digital identity. The creation of the latter makes it possible to exert an influence on the visitor in order to improve his E-reputation, while proposing messages adapted according to the targets and digital tools selected.

In Morocco, the digital issue has become an important subject of discussion for local actors. However, the Ministry of Tourism, ONMT (The Moroccan National Tourist Office) and SMIT (The Moroccan society of tourism engineering) presented on July 26, 2016, the digital and digital tourism strategy, which has as main objective the repositioning of the Morocco offer in terms of tourism through everything that is digital.

From the above, we can argue that digital can be an important and determining lever for the development and growth of the attractiveness of a territory as a tourist destination, however, we must be well aware of what is included in the concept of "Digital" and what it implies.

The CRT of Marrakech is part of this dynamic to enhance local tourism and improve the online visibility of the destination through a stronger digital insertion aimed at strengthening e

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

reputation and the dissemination of information rich in products. Tourism and investment opportunities

In this context if digital can appear as a lever to improve the attractiveness of territories, it should be noted that the tourist animation of the territory in the digital age can usefully rely on the inhabitants themselves to promote their territory and contribute to welcoming tourists. They thus become tourist “ambassadors” of their territory. A community that must be mobilized and animated.

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

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THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CASE OF THE CITY OF MARRAKECH

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**THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF TERRITORIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA:
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