

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS MARKETING TOOL FOR TOURISM IN KENYA. CASE STUDY: KENYA SAFARI AND TOURS

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<p>Abstract:</p> <p>Social media has become extremely effective form of marketing which has raised the brand awareness, brand loyalty, customer services and lead to increase sales hence opening tremendous opportunities for companies to market their products and services using social media.</p> <p>The objective of this research was to find out how tourism companies are integrating social media into marketing so as to boost awareness and generate excitement about tourism destination as well as finding what exactly has social media strategies done to market tourism companies.</p> <p>The theoretical background was based on theories of social media marketing mainly collected from social media literature that included both books and articles journals and the aim of this was actually to provide readers general understanding of social media and its impacts on the customers.</p> <p>The empirical study was performed through discussions, interviews and observation in the case company. The study was performed using a qualitative research approach and a case study method was utilized. After all the data was gathered and the information was carefully analyzed to give the reasons why companies use social media as a marketing tool for their companies. The research finding of the study are to proposed important suggestion for Kenya Safari and Tour in using social media as a part of its marketing strategy</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

With two thirds of the global internet population visiting social networks, businesses are increasingly utilizing these platforms to engage with clients and other businesses, don't get left behind!

Social Media is an extremely effective form of marketing which can be used to increase brand awareness, brand loyalty, customer service, and lead to increased sales. It can be used to present a business brand to millions of people worldwide.

Social media is not just for large corporations, small businesses can also reap the benefits of implementing a social media campaign and therefore for many businesses, social media is just one more buzz word they have to wrestle with. However, social media isn't just a buzz word and it's not going away social media can have a profound effect on almost any type of business. (Housingea 2010)

Coming together with the Web 2.0 phenomenon, the birth of social media is busted out in new marketing era. It is becoming a hot topic for its huge influences. The existence of social media

earns the attention of people by making them from being passive consumers to active producers in terms of sharing and contributing via networks (Anderson 2008, 63).

That is explanation why most companies today are thinking of applying social media into their business. Its advantages to and effects on organizations, however, have not been recognized accurately in comparison with other marketing tools.

Using social media as a marketing tool in tourism industry adds profound value to the new media trend. How tourism companies gain the benefits from social media is a worthy phenomenon to be researched

1.1 Scope of the study/backgrounds

Strategies of social media marketing in an organization are the main factors that contribute to a well-being of the most companies operating in business and customer markets. This is because the use of social media in marketing their products and service create customer awareness. Hence in most situations the customers tend to prefer to the services that are mostly satisfied with.

Planning a successful use of social media marketing strategy involves linking a company mission and business strategy to marketing decision and programs. In the current situation the case study company is using the social media marketing in marketing their tourism company and therefore it important for us to understand how the company is planning its operation and what are the current benefits of the company resulting from the use of social media marketing.

Social media marketing strategy in an organization defines how the organization uses the social media tools such as facebook, twitter and YouTube to achieve a marketing objective for the organization. The social media strategy implements and supports higher-level strategies and provides markets and customer information which is used for development and adjustments of the organization business strategy. the current approach being used by the case study company on the use of social media marketing shows that the company strategy is not fully implemented hence the company needs more decision on how to maximize the available marketing opportunities to win many customers depending on the improve strategy that they are heading to in terms of using social media marketing to market their company. The scope of the study will

create proposals on how the case company can utilize social media marketing principles to achieve an effective market for their company. The outcome of the implementation of the suggested social media marketing principle and strategies will allow Kenya safaris and Tours to allocate enough resources strategically, and maximize market opportunities through the use of social media marketing which will increase the company reputation and increase profits of the company.

1.2 Research context

The theoretical part of this research will include various aspects of social media marketing strategies. The research was conducted in a co-operation of case study Company known as Kenya Safaris and Tours. Kenya Safaris and Tours have an office located in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya and several reservation and booking in different countries. Kenya Safaris and tours is a company owned by the Ministry of tourism in Kenya and the company is specialized in offering tour services to individual customers and corporate customers traveling to Kenya

A qualitative approach was chosen in writing this research. The first part of the research will present the theoretical background followed by the company case company introduction and analysis

1.3 Purpose of the study and research question

Most companies operating in the tourism industry in, Kenya are either locally or foreign owned with majority of the companies having trying to adapt the use of social media marketing in marketing their company products and services. The fact that Kenya is destined to be a popular tourist destination has attracted large number of tourist all over the world. Therefore the introduction of use of social media marketing in advertising the companies across the planet is seen as a possible improve in the Kenya tourism industry. Though the companies doesn't implement the use of this social media marketing correctly in regardless of the profit they earn by using it.

Therefore the research will try to investigate and generate strategies which will assist tourism companies in developing an effective use of social media strategies. The proposal discussed

includes implementing major social media marketing strategies and other minor strategies to help the Kenya Safaris and tours achieve its business and organizational goals.

The final result of the research will present a social media marketing strategies which if implemented will result in Kenya Safaris and Tours gaining a competitive advantage in Kenya tourism industry. In theory, the research will try to contribute and generate new ideas from a holistic approach which may be of help in positioning and attaining competitive advantage by implementing social media marketing strategies. Therefore based on this information the research question for this thesis is work:

- 1. To find out how tourism companies are integrating social media into marketing so as to boost awareness and generate excitement about tourism destination?**
- 2. What has the adoption and integration of social media strategies done to market tourism?**

1.4 Limitation of the research

In this section the main concept are introduced and limitation for the research are presented. It is necessary to highlight assumption and various limitation of the study. The objective was to prepare a social media marketing strategies that would serve the entire customers whom Kenya safaris and tours plans to appeal to during their period of operation. Social, media marketing strategies that can assist the case study company appeal to cooperate customers have been briefly analyzed in the empirical section. The limitation of this research affects how social media marketing strategies are examined and how an effective social media marketing strategy can be implanted.

The theories used in this research content have an international character. Although relating to marketing strategies , the research emphasize social media marketing strategies which concentrated only on matching companies offering the tour facilities to its customers' needs. The technological aspect of information systems and application that are used in the social media marketing context are out of the scope but are only discussed briefly in terms of the value they

can deliver to Kenya safaris and tours. It also essential to highlight that this study is not an effort to solve one specific aspects of developing a social media marketing strategies in details, but rather a research that would contribute to knowledge about various aspects of social media marketing.

1.5 Structure of the research

The research consists of six sections and the diagram in figure 1 illustrates the various sections it contains. Section 1 includes an introduction and background information of the research; the theories relevant for the research problem are presented in section 2 and 3. Section 4 entails a description of the methodology approaches chosen for the research. The case study (Kenya Safaris and Tours) company is presented in section 5. Section 6 includes the empirical research and the discussion concerning the case study and the final conclusion is in section 7. The figure bellows shows how the research was planned and conducted and the linkages in the various sections

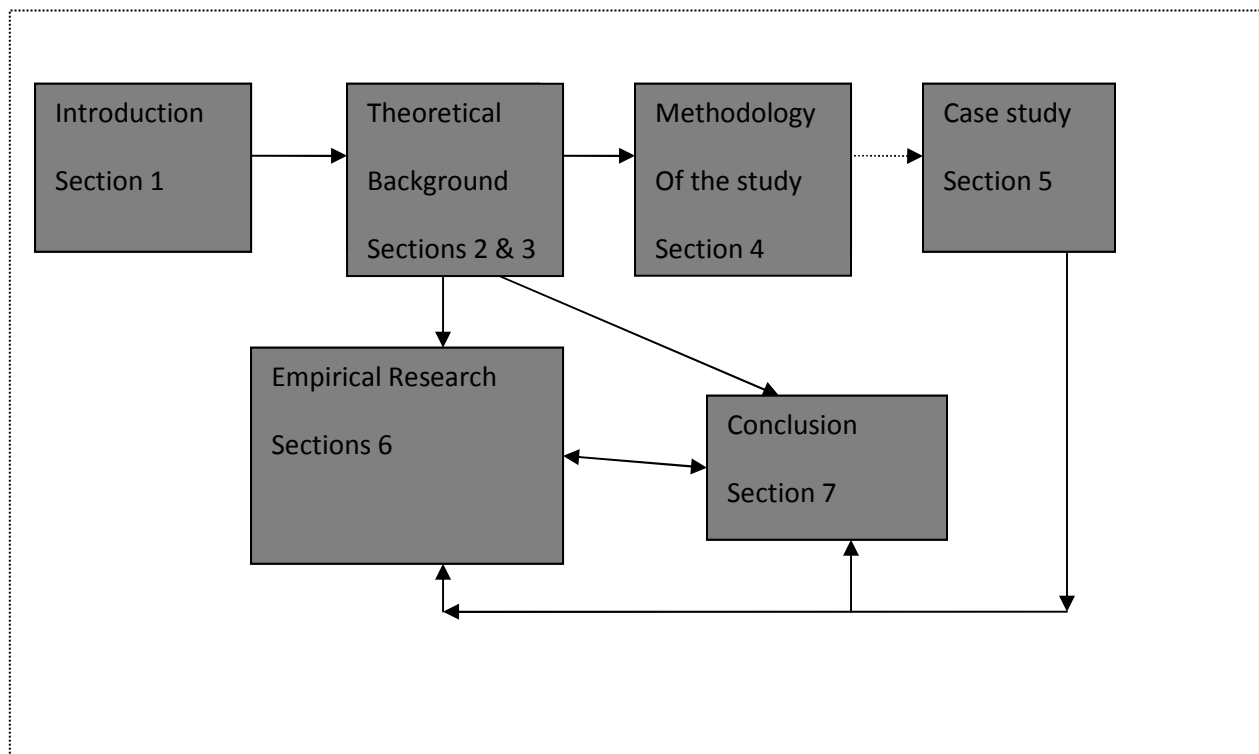


Figure1; structure of the thesis

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This section discusses the research topic, effects of social media marketing on tourism companies specifically based on how tourism companies are implementing the social media strategies so as to be able to market their products and services using it. There exist many theoretical suggestions that have been stated by various researchers on efforts to address the factors affecting social media marketing in companies. The study therefore selected the most appropriate theories to address this research.

2.1 The evolution of social media in marketing business

The use of social media evolution in marketing business has become fundamentally transformative and is rapidly evolving the architecture of business, communications, and the dissemination of information and influence. To understand what marketing exactly means it define as a process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return (Kotler & Amstron 2010,26)

Today, there are businesses that engage in social media and those that do not. Those at least experimenting with the formidable, yet shifting landscape of intelligence and communication are learning how to adapt and connect in a new world of conversation, networking, and influence. Those that have yet to evaluate the opportunities and advantages for socialized marketing, service, sales, and branding will find it increasingly difficult to learn, adapt, and magnetize customers, prospects as well as their influencers.

As markets evolve, consumers gain a greater sense of adeptness and perspective. They too learn and adapt. In the process, individuals and the authoritative communities they form, possess a more sophisticated understanding of media literacy, community support, and prowess in new media communication. Consumers have choices and they're increasingly practiced through natural selection. (Briansolis 2010)

Then along came the internet and growing rapidly. Unlike the traditional marketing of mass media, internet broadens the scope of marketing in wider range of audiences. It overcomes the limitations of geography and time zones to send the marketing message very fast to target segments. In today's life, when customers are no longer being passive in access of information, the use of social media creates opportunities for both businesses and individuals to find their new audiences. Customers become more communicative and better in control than ever. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 19) The changes of marketing are mentioned in the figure below;

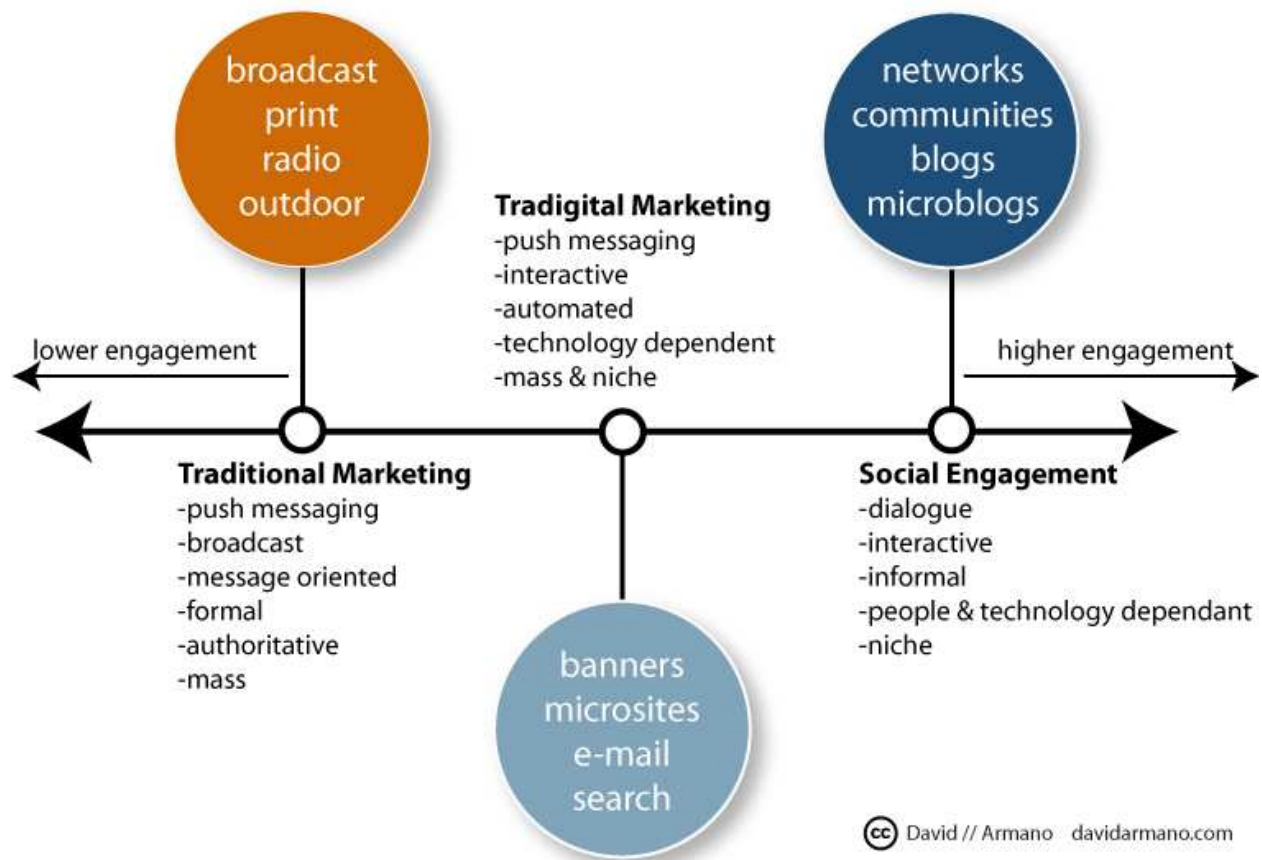


Figure 2; Social engagement spectrum (Armano 2009)

Through the social engagement spectrum showed in figure 2, we can see that marketing is experiencing a profound shift from lower engagement to higher engagement level. If the

traditional marketing and tradigital marketing are push then it becomes pull with social media nowadays. Even tradigital marketing is more interactive with users but it lacks engagement of customers whereas social media empowers customers to participate in the online community by using social networking sites, for example. It does not mean anymore the technology only but social engagement with people has become a core factor. Thus with higher engagement, it leads to an increase in demand of niche markets, creates new opportunities in the emerging marketplace. (Anderson 2008, 57)

2.2 Social media overview

In this section the author gives an overview of social media and its impact on marketing definition and related concepts.

2.2.1 Web 2.0

The term Web 2.0 is associated with web applications that facilitate participatory information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. A Web 2.0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators (prosumers) of user-generated content in a virtual community, in contrast to websites where users (consumers) are limited to the passive viewing of content that was created for them. (wikipedia 2011)

Goossen (2008) in an interview with (Klein2008) suggested the key concepts of Web 2.0 are the harnessing of social networking, collective intelligence. It more concentrates on the data collected through computers rather than its own technological factor.

Web 2.0 is here today, yet its vast disruptive impact is just beginning. More than just the latest technology buzzword, it's a transformative force that's propelling companies across all industries toward a new way of doing business. Those who act on the Web 2.0 opportunity stand to gain an early-mover advantage in their markets (Musser & O'Reilly 2006, 4).

2.2.2 Social media

According to B&C (2010), the term “social media” is widely used nowadays. The first time it appeared was in 2004, after LinkedIn created its social networking application. The applications primarily an online technology tool to allow people to communicate easily, utilizing the Internet to share and discuss information (B&C, 2010). According to Zarrella (2010), social Media is defined best in the context of the previous industrial media paradigm. Traditional media such as television, newspapers, radio and magazines are one-way, static broadcasting technologies. Zarrella (2010) argues that magazines and newspapers are distributing expensive content to consumers while advertisers pay for the privilege to insert their ads into the content.

Readers, in turn, have no possibility to send the editors instant feedback in the case they disagree with something. New web technologies have made it easy for anyone to create, and most importantly, to distribute their own content. A blog post, a “tweet” on Twitter, or a YouTube Video can be produced and viewed by millions virtually for free. Advertisers do not have to pay publishers or distributor’s huge sums of money to embed their ads; now they can create their own interesting content that viewers will flock to (Zarrella, 2010). Also, Weber (2009), states that traditional media such as television, radio and newspapers are providing one-way communication; while social media, on the other hand, allows everyone to publish and to contribute in online conversations. He defines social media as “the online place where people with a common interest can gather to share thoughts, comments and opinions”.

He further states that social media consists of social networks, such as Facebook, branded web destinations, like Amazon.com and ebay.com and companies, such as IBM and Dell.

Additionally, Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2009), define social media as online applications, platforms and media which aim to facilitate interactions, collaborations and the sharing of content”. The social media is a new world of unpaid media, created by individuals and companies on the Internet (Weber, 2009). According to Zarrella (2010), social media comes in many forms:

- blogs
- micro blogs (Twitter)

- social networks (Facebook)
- media-sharing sites (YouTube)
- social bookmarking and voting sites (Digg, Reddit)
- review sites (Yelp)
- forums
- virtual worlds (Second Life) Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2009) also divides social media into the following key categories
- Blogs – Comprising individuals or firms online journals that are often combined with audio or video podcasts.
- Social networks – Applications allowing users to build personal web sites accessible to other users for exchange of personal content and communication.
- Content communities – Websites for organizing and sharing particular types of content.
- Forums/bulletin boards – Sites for exchanging ideas and information, usually around special interests.
- Content aggregators – Applications allowing users to fully customize the web content they wish to access.

2.2.3. Benefits of social media

Social media marketing experts underscore the advantages of using social media for marketing as the ability to reach a wide audience, two-ways communication, accessibility and viral effect. Social media marketing promises to improve promotional efforts significantly. One of the major advantages of social media marketing is the ability to reach a wide audience breaking down geographic boundaries. Historically communication with others was limited by geographical boundaries and the current technological of the era. Today's social media technologies enable nearly everyone to reach a global audience for interpersonal interaction and exchanging information (Gillin, 2009). Web 2.0 encompasses tools and platforms that enable people from different part of the world to be connected and to exchange information with each other

2.2.4 Social media optimization

Social media optimization (SMO) consists of more narrowly defined activity than social media marketing. Varagic (2008) described social media optimization as a process of optimizing one's sites/ blogs to be higher presence in social media searches and sites, more easily linked by other sites and more frequently discussed online in blogosphere and other social media.

Social Media Optimization is in many ways connected as a technique to viral marketing where word of mouth is created not through friends or family but through the use of networking in social bookmarking, video and photo sharing websites. In a similar way the engagement with blogs achieves the same by sharing content through the use of RSS in the blogosphere and special blog search engines to understand this work the figure below shows how various key social platforms are linked



Figure 3; key social media platforms (source; virtual project consulting 2010)

2.3 Word-of-mouth and social media marketing

Word of mouth is a pre-existing phenomenon that marketers are only now learning how to harness, amplify, and improve. Word of mouth marketing isn't about creating word of mouth -- it's learning how to make it work within a marketing objective. That said, word of mouth can be encouraged and facilitated. Companies can work hard to make people happier, they can listen to consumers, they can make it easier for them to tell their friends, and they can make certain that influential individuals know about the good qualities of a product or service. (Word of mouth marketing association 2010)

Word of mouth marketing empowers people to share their experiences. It's harnessing the voice of the customer for the good of the brand. And it's acknowledging that the unsatisfied customer is equally powerful. Word of mouth can't be faked or invented. Attempting to fake word of mouth is unethical and creates a backlash, damages the brand, and tarnishes the corporate reputation. Legitimate word of mouth marketing acknowledges consumers' intelligence it never attempts to fool them. Ethical marketers reject all tactics related to manipulation, deception, infiltration, or dishonesty. (Word of mouth marketing association 2010)

All word of mouth marketing techniques are based on the concepts of customer satisfaction, two-way dialog, and transparent communications (Word of mouth marketing association 2010). The basic elements are:

- Educating people about your products and services
- Identifying people most likely to share their opinions
- providing tools that make it easier to share information
- Studying how, where, and when opinions are being shared
- Listening and responding to supporters, detractors, and neutrals

In order to deepen the understanding of social media marketing and word-of-mouth marketing, a comparison is provided in the Table below.

Table 1; comparison between Word-of-mouth marketing (WOMM) and Social media marketing (SMM)

Word-of-mouth marketing (WOMM)	Social media marketing (SMM)
Relies primarily on influencers to spread the word.	Spreads by itself through the social web and relies on passing message along from person-to-person.
Requires excellent product or service influencers can use, be excited about and pass along.	Message must be outrageous, entertaining or provide exceptional value to attract attention and be passed along

Generates brand-awareness and sustained website traffic.	Not always relevant to the brand
Engages customers long-term through the product life-cycle.	Usually generates a short traffic spike.
Online and offline (15 – 20% online).	Online only.

Source: (Rijk 2007)

From Table we can see most clearly the differences between the two types of marketing. Word-of-mouth marketing is based on the drastic involvement of user and empowers the influencers' who play the role of opinion-making leaders spread the word about your products and services both online and offline whereas social media marketing makes interaction merely online through social media channels.

Word-of-mouth Marketing Association (2010) has suggested different subcategories of word-of-mouth marketing techniques such as buzz marketing, viral marketing, community marketing, grassroots marketing, evangelist marketing, product seeding, influencer marketing, cause marketing, conversation creation, brand blogging and referrals programs. Brief explanations are given for the commonly used ones.

- **Buzz Marketing:** Using high-profile entertainment or news to get people to talk about your brand, products and services.
- **Viral Marketing:** Creating entertaining or informative messages that are designed to be passed along in an exponential fashion, often electronically or by email.
- **Community Marketing:** Forming or supporting niche communities that are likely to share interests about the brand (such as user groups, fan clubs, and discussion forums); providing tools, content, and information to support those communities.

- Grassroots Marketing: Organizing and motivating volunteers to engage in personal or local outreach.
- Product Seeding: Placing the right product into the right hands at the right time, providing information or samples to influential individuals.
- Influencer Marketing: Identifying key communities and opinion leaders who are likely to talk about products and have the ability to influence the opinions of others.
- Brand Blogging: Creating blogs and participating in the blogosphere, in the spirit of open, transparent communications; sharing information of value that the blog community may talk about. (Word of mouth marketing association 2010)

2.4 social media platforms

In this section the author gives a general overview of various social media platform and their uses in marketing

2.4.1 The different forms of social media

Social media websites come in a wide variety of ‘flavours’ which are all broadly based around the premise of personal interaction, creating, exchanging and sharing content, rating it and discussing its relative merits as a community. In today’s consumer’s life, social media have reached the position where very fast-evolving growth and its overwhelming coverage in digital media scene have been recognized. More than 70% of companies have already used social media and many are unresisting of social media’s increase. Social media is approaching to a large number of active Internet users all the time by its variety of platforms which provoke online customers’ interaction, facilitate the content creation and sharing (Bloomberg BusinessWeek 2009).

Ryan and Jones (2009, 157-169) have developed a list of social media forms which is based on relatively their primary functions.

Social bookmarking

Social bookmarking allow users to 'save' bookmarks to their favourite web resources such as pages, audio, video, whatever and categorize them using tags labels that help you to identify and filter the content you want later. The idea of social bookmarking services is to stimulate the users to manage their bookmarks using tags instead of having them in the browser-based systems of the computer's folder. This also makes them easy to share with friends, colleagues or the world at large, and the tag-based organization means no more cumbersome hierarchical folder systems to remember. Just choose a 'tag' and you'll be presented with a list of all the bookmarks labelled with that tag. (Ryan & Jones 2010, 158)

Behind the scenes these sites anonymously aggregate the data submitted by all of their users, allowing them to sort and rank sites according to their user-defined tags and popularity. One favourite social bookmarking site is delicious.com. (Ryan & Jones 2010, 158)

The advantage for using bookmarking in marketing is that it create an exposure to your business through its useful content it makes it easy for visitors to bookmark your pages by providing 'Share this' links or icons encouraging them to do just that you can harness the social element of these sites to improve your reach, and get valuable, targeted traffic in return. The tags applied to your pages by people who add them to social bookmarking sites can help search engines and visitors to gauge what your site is about more effectively. This can boost its perceived relevance and authority for particular keywords, which can in turn help your search visibility. (Ryan & Jones 2010, 158)

Social media submission sites

Social media submission sites are made for submission and discussion of articles about online marketing, are rather like social bookmarking sites only instead of saving personal bookmarks users submit articles, videos, podcasts and other pieces of content they think the broader community would appreciate. The more people who 'vote' for a particular content item, the higher up the rankings it rise. Submissions that get enough votes end up on the site's home page, which can drive significant traffic. As well as the votes, of course, there also tends to be a lot of discussion and debate on these sites, which means they can offer tremendous insight into the way people think and react. Some favourite social media submission sites are Digg (www.digg.com)

and Reddit (www.reddit.com), and niche sites like Sphinn (www.sphinn.com) (Ryan & Jones 2010, 158)

There are many advantages of social media submission sites such as amplifying the visibility, traffic and online. If a company have the articles or content rise high in those social media submission sites, that company will get a significant traffic and loyal. Besides that, the opportunities for a company to reinforce its profile and a perceived position within online community are at hand. If you keep on with anything relevant and compelling by joining into the submission and online round-table discussion, audiences will start to pay attention to you, trust you and gain perception of your brand or service. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 159)

Forums and discussion sites

The advent of forums and discussion sites comes at very early in the days of Internet development. Some of most popular discussion boards come up such as Yahoo Groups and Google Groups. Those groups are created with public or only-member access which allows users to post messages and to discuss within the forum. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 159)

Forum and discussion sites are used for many reasons in marketing for example

- Get closer to your customers: Checking out what consumers are talking about in forums is a great way to find out what makes them tick. The more you can learn about your customers, the better prepared you will be to engage with them in a meaningful way.
- Raise your profile: Contribute to the discussion, offer help and advice, and demonstrate your expertise. Pretty soon people will start to respect and trust your contribution to the community – and that can do wonders for your online reputation and profile.
- Nip bad things in the bud: By participating in forums you will be able to spot potentially negative comments or conversations relating to your business or brand and be proactive in resolving them before they escalate. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 159)

Media sharing sites

Media sharing sites are incredibly popular it allows communities of members to upload, share, comment on and discuss their photographs. YouTube (www.youtube.com), Y! Video (video.yahoo.com), MSN Video Soapbox (video.msn.com/) and others do the same for video content. The sites typically allow you to make content publicly available or restrict access to the

people you specify, to send content to your ‘friends’, and even to ‘embed’ (seamlessly integrate) the content in your blog post or website for others to find it, distribute it and discuss it. Some favourite media sharing are Flickr (www.flickr.com) and Picasa Web Albums (www.picasaweb.google.com). (Ryan & Jones 2009, 160)

Marketers use media sharing site for analyzing the popularity of items on content submission sites and reading the user comments, you can gain insight into your target market’s likes and dislikes and can incorporate that into your own content creation. These sites are the ideal vehicle for rapid distribution of your own digital media content. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 160)

Reviews and rating sites

They allow users to review and rate companies, products, services, books, music, hotels, restaurants anything they like. They can be stand-alone review sites, like Epinions.com (www.epinions.com), Reviewcentre.com (www.reviewcentre.com) or LouderVoice (www.loudervoice.com), or a review component added to a broader site, such as the product rating and review facilities on e-commerce sites like Amazon (www.amazon.com). (Ryan & Jones 2009, 161)

Review and rating sites rely on advertising to generate revenue and therefore offer advertising opportunities for businesses either directly or through advertising and affiliate networks. Even if people aren’t rating your business directly, you can still get valuable information on these sites on what’s working for consumers and what’s not within your particular industry with the use of review and rating sites. It also helps in posting reviews about your business, that sort of feedback is pure gold reinforcing what you’re doing well and pointing out areas where you can improve for marketing the site is a research free tool. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 162)

Social network sites

The purpose of those sites is to allow users participate in a social network by creating their own profile and connecting with friends or other contacts within network or inviting friends and real-world contact to joint into the online community. So, there are vast numbers of users engaged in the social network sites. It is an online meeting platform for people for creating the content,

sharing them with others, and interacting with the like-minded people easily (Ryan & Jones 2009, 162).

Talking about social network, some popular sites have come up such as Facebook, MySpace, Bebo and LinkedIn, which attain most attention on the stream of social media marketing.

Social network sites are best places to look for advertising chances based on analyses of users' profile information. Controversies around the benefit of advertising in social network sites still take place. However, it is undeniable that the advertising is trendy on those sites. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 162)

If a company offers customers transparent information and stimulate their interest in products or services, the long-term relationship is created online and offline. The company should keep eyes on customers and let the influencers within the online community to promote the company's brand.

Podcasts

Podcasts are, in many ways, just the rich media extension of the blogging concept. A podcast is simply a series of digital media files (audio or video) distributed over the internet. These can be accessed directly via a website or, more usually, are downloaded to a computer or synchronized to a digital media device for playback at the user's leisure. They tend to be organized as chronological 'shows', with new episodes released at regular intervals, much like the radio and television show formats many of them emulate. Users can usually offer their feedback on particular episodes on the accompanying website or blog. Some favourite podcast are Podcast.com (www.podcast.com), Podcast Alley (www.podcastalley.com), Podomatic (www.podomatic.com) and even Apple's iTunes (www.apple.com/itunes) offer a convenient way to find, sample and subscribe to podcasts of interest.

Podcasts can be a valuable channel to reach target market. Unlike mass media, this social media platform open the new way for companies to be digital conscious players. Companies can create own podcasting services which provide podcasts to prospect customers. Initially, if customers are less tech-savvy, they prefer to view now or listen now with nothing to install or register. However, if the customers find the content compelling and right for them, then they will subscribe the company's site. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 165-166)

Micro-blogging

Micro-blogging is a relatively new craze that's sweeping through online early adopters, and looks set to explode as more people embrace social media and learn of its existence. It is essentially a short-message broadcast service that lets people keep their 'friends' up to date via short text posts (usually less than 160 characters). Some favourite micro blogging sites are Twitter (www.twitter.com) is the biggest player in this space, Google-acquired Jaiku (www.jaiku.com) and Pownce (www.pownce.com). The real value of micro-blogging isn't necessarily in the individual posts; it's in the collective aggregation of those mini-posts into more than the sum of their parts. When you receive frequent, short updates from the people you're connected to, you begin to get a feel for them, to develop a better understanding of what they're all about, and to feel a stronger connection with them. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 166)

Micro-blogging is efficient in improving customer service. On micro-blogging sites, a company can share the information about products and services very quickly. People can post their opinions, which can be positive comments or complaints. Those are like instant feedback for the company to analyse, resolve any mistakes and to improve customer service managing system. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 167)

Wikis

Wikis are online collections of web pages that are literally open for anyone to create, edit, discuss, comment on and generally contribute to. They are perhaps the ultimate vehicle for mass collaboration, the most famous example, of course, being Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org), the free online encyclopedia. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 168-169)

Wikipedia has become the largest encyclopedia in the world with more than 3 millions articles in English, reaching the visitors number of 68 million every month. In comparison with Encyclopedia Britannica – an English encyclopedia published by experts, Wikipedia has surpassed to be the leader in this field (Wikipedia n.d).

Wikis for marketers;

The concept of using wikis as a marketing tool is a very new phenomenon, and their value may not be as readily apparent as with some other forms of social media. However, they are a

powerful collaborative tool and, with collaboration between companies and their customers in the ascendancy, look out for increasing use of wikis by innovative organizations in the very near future.

- **Build a strong collaborative community of advocates around your brand:** Wikis can be a great way to encourage constructive interaction and collaboration between people inside your organization and people outside it. Consumers begin to feel ownership and connection with a brand that encourages, facilitates and values their contribution. That ownership evolves into loyalty and then advocacy: powerful stuff from a marketing perspective, especially when you consider that these contributors will often be online influencers who will go on to sing your praises on other social media sites.
- **Harness the wisdom of the crowd:** How much talent, knowledge and experience do you have inside your organization? Probably quite a lot but it pales into insignificance when compared to the massive pool of talent, experience and expertise you can access online. Retired experts, up-and-coming whizz-kids, talented amateurs, undiscovered geniuses – they're all out there. Wikis give you a simple, powerful and compelling way to draw on and capture some of that collective intelligence. Why not harness a wiki, for example, to help refine the design of your products, come up with your next great marketing campaign, define a more efficient business process, produce and/or augment product documentation, develop a comprehensive knowledge base – or anything else that might benefit from a collaborative approach?

Blogs

In the space of a very few years the widespread popularity and adoption of the blog as a medium of self-expression and communication have caused one of the most fundamental shifts in the history of modern media. Barriers to entry have come crashing down, and easy-to-use blogging platforms have liberated millions of individuals, giving them access to a global audience. People all over the world are using blogs to report local news, vent their frustrations, offer their opinions, share their visions and experiences, unleash their creativity and generally wax lyrical about their passions. Bloggers read each other's posts, they comment on them, they link to each other prolifically, and the best of them have a massive following of avid and loyal readers. These

readers go on to elaborate on what they've read in their own blogs, and spread the word through their own online social networks. Some favourite blogs are (www.blogger.com) and WordPress (www.wordpress.com). (Ryan & Jones 2009,164)

Blog is becoming an important component in the business arsenal too, adding a personal component to the bland corporate façade, helping companies to reach out and make human connections in an increasingly human online world. Blogs also helps to show customers a personal side to your business, give them valuable information they can use, provide answers and improve their overall experience of dealing with your company. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 165)

3 TOURISM

Although many of us have been "tourists" at some point in our lives, defining what tourism actually is can be difficult. Tourism is the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes. (sidestore 2010)

Tourism is a dynamic and competitive industry that requires the ability to constantly adapt to customers' changing needs and desires, as the customer's satisfaction, safety and enjoyment are particularly the focus of tourism businesses. (sidestore 2010)

3.1 Marketing and Promotion of tourism in Kenya

There is need to change the image or perception of Kenya in overseas markets which has been adversely affected by negative publicity, whether warranted or unwarranted. The Kenya Tourist Board shall be strengthened to continue its key role in promoting and marketing Kenya both internationally and locally. Key policies include the promotion of up market eco-tourism and wildlife safaris; gradual move away from low value package or mass tourism; the diversification of tourism products and markets; and the promotion of regional and domestic, as well as international, tourism. Emphasis shall be placed on obtaining a precise understanding of customer needs, and developing and delivering the products that customer's desire. The policy

endorses the following broad strategies for development of tourism from international, regional and domestic markets. (Ministry of tourism Kenya 2006)

3.1.1 International Tourism

The main objective (once the current market recovery initiative is completed) is to establish Kenya as the destination of choice in Africa for international visitors. Destination marketing shall be spearheaded by Government through the Kenya tourism board in partnership with the private sector. The main means of achieving this objective shall be to:

- Differentiate Kenya with a distinct market image and positioning in target markets as a quality safari and coastal destination offering a rich diversity of culture, adventure and activity experiences;
- Build on the new Kenyan brand image in a manner that reflects the diversity of the tourism product and that has a strong and distinct appeal in the marketplace
- Maximize the impact of scarce marketing resources of the government and private sectors by aiming at concentration rather than dispersal of marketing efforts;
- Target new segments in established source markets and core segments in emerging markets, particularly in Africa and Asia;
- Effectively carry out joint marketing with appropriate partners, particularly with the Kenyan private sector, airlines, Kenya wild service, exporters, regional operators; and other tourism and conservation organizations;
- Establish overseas offices in key markets and employ marketing representatives through the Kenya Tourist Board on an agency basis in subsidiary markets;
- Work closely with East Africa community partner states to jointly market complementary products and to facilitate multi-destination tourism within the region;
- Make full use of, and adapt to, the opportunities afforded by internet and niche marketing to influence consumers and travel agents, and to increase the marketing reach of Kenya in new emerging and niche markets;
- Encourage the making of documentary and feature films in Kenya as a highly cost-effective means of increasing destination awareness; and

- Support the establishment of a sustainable funding mechanism for tourism marketing and development;

The Task Force (comprising line Ministries and private sector representation) which has been appointed by Government to address media responses to matters relating to terrorism threats and their implications for tourism shall remain in place in order to ensure consistency in Government media communications and to avoid sending inappropriate signals to the generating markets. (Ministry of tourism Kenya 2006)

3.1.2 Domestic and Regional Tourism Markets

Domestic and to a lesser extent regional tourism have sustained the operation of many hotels, lodges and other tourist facilities during recent difficult periods. The marketing strategy recognizes the importance of these markets, and the need to allocate adequate resources and budgets for the promotion of regional and domestic tourism. (Ministry of tourism Kenya 2006)

3.1.3 Domestic Tourism

Kenya's tourism products attract visitors from all over the world. However, most Kenyan nationals have not been able to experience the same attractions due to financial constraints, lack of tourism knowledge coupled with a paucity of programmes and packages that would enable nationals to participate in domestic tourism. Strategically, the domestic market (comprising Kenyan nationals as well as foreign nationals living in Kenya) shall be further developed to form an enduring foundation of the demand for tourism facilities and services, and not just a temporary palliative during times of difficulty. Focusing on tourism awareness education, public relations and publicity, Government shall take a proactive role in promoting domestic tourism to nationals and residents of Kenya as a core strategy. It shall forge linkages between the industry and national and resident domestic segments through ongoing tourism awareness educational campaigns aimed at the local population; sensitizing tourism suppliers as to the value of domestic tourism; and encouraging the development and promotion of tailor-made products, programmes and packages specifically for domestic tourists. (Ministry of tourism Kenya 2006)

3.1.4 Regional Tourism

Tourism practitioners shall also be encouraged to recognize the importance of, and pay increased attention to, attracting visitors from other parts of Africa to Kenya by developing and implementing specific strategies and action plans aimed at nationals and residents of neighboring countries. Particular attention shall be given to promotions to those African countries with which Kenya has good air links and to which Kenya can offer complementary rather than similar products. (Ministry of tourism Kenya 2006)

3.1.5 Cruise Tourism

Government shall seek to re-establish Kenya's role and position in Indian Ocean cruise tourism by encouraging KPA to develop improved cruise ship and passenger reception facilities at the Port of Mombasa. It shall also encourage KPA and other stakeholders to actively participate in the Cruise Indian Ocean Association; attend Sea Trade and other cruise industry trade exhibitions, particularly with a view to attracting North European cruise lines to winter in the Indian Ocean using Mombasa as a homeport; and join together in targeted marketing to individual cruise lines. Government shall also encourage and support measures to re-establish cruise tourism on Lake Victoria. (Ministry of tourism Kenya 2006)

4 METHODOLOGY

The objective of section 4 explains how the research was conducted detailing the methods used and evaluating reliability and validity of the research.

4.1 Research approach

Due to nature of the study the study a qualitative research approach was used to examine the study. A qualitative method as pointed by Strauss and Corbin (1998, 24) allows respondents freedom of expression, opinion, views, and arguments that might not have been attained explicitly through other approaches. Qualitative research according to Collins and Hussey (2003, 142) also helps the researcher to discover different aspects during the interview and investigates answers in details. "A major strength of the qualitative approach is the depth to which explorations are conducted and descriptions are written, usually resulting in sufficient details for the reader to grasp the idiosyncrasies of the situation.

"The ultimate aim of qualitative research is to offer a perspective of a situation and provide well-written research reports that reflect the researcher's ability to illustrate or describe the corresponding phenomenon. One of the greatest strengths of the qualitative approach is the richness and depth of explorations and descriptions." Myers (2002, 182) the table below gives some main types of qualitative research methods commonly used.

Table 2; Types of qualitative research methods

Case study	Attempts to shed light on phenomena by studying in-depth a single case example of the phenomena. The case can be an individual person, an event, a group, or an institution.
Grounded theory	Theory is developed inductively from a corpus of data acquired by a participant-observer.
Phenomenology	Describes the structures of experience as they present themselves to consciousness, without recourse to theory, deduction, or assumptions from other disciplines
Ethnography	Focuses on the sociology of meaning through close field observation of sociocultural phenomena. Typically, the ethnographer focuses on a community.
Historical	Systematic collection and objective evaluation of data related to past occurrences in order to test hypotheses concerning causes, effects, or trends of these events that may help to explain present events and anticipate future events. (Gay, 1996)

Source: (James Neill 2006)

4.2 Data collection and Methods

The data used in the analysis was gathered from two main sources. As discussed by the Saunders et al. (1997), for a research to be considered a valid and accurate, both primary and secondary sources of data have to be used.

4.2.1 Primary sources

Primary research consists of the following ways of collecting data observations, experiments, surveys and interview but for this particular research interview was chosen as the most suitable way of collecting data.

4.2.1.1 Interviews

Primary data was collected in form of interviews with industry experts who comprised of ministry of Tourism in Kenya and established Tour operators in Kenyan Safaris. All discussions were recorded during telephone conversation. The data was then transferred to a Microsoft Word document in order to avoid omitting information or ambiguous errors. Also to ensure that the right information was retrieved over the telephone, the respondent requested copies of the answered as email attachment. The preliminary questionnaires and information was sent prior to the interviews with background information to formalize the respondent in the research area. The duration of the interview was approximately forty-five minutes per respondent

4.2.2 Secondary sources

Secondary research was conducted using various past theories as stated below and this included, text books, newspapers and related journals, past research and electronic sources.

4.2.2.1 Text books

Text books are written by different professionals and academic staff. They mainly do not have a specific reference to a certain areas and few of them are recently published however, the merit of using text books is that they basically contains generals ideas and a researcher can compare different authors on different topics

4.2.2.2 Newspapers and related journals

The journals used were current or archives. Newspapers contain information researched by journalist who might be biased. Attention was paid to newspapers articles used. Journals have more tendencies to be biased even though they are more practical in orientation. The journals used in this research were mainly in electronic format and downloads via the internet.

4.2.2.3 Past research

Past research constitute research conducted by other students in the past years. In the this researcher, past research was used mainly to gain ideas on how past research was conducted and format of the research

4.2.2.4 Electronic sources

Internet contains the most updated information about the area of researcher. Even though the internet has much information regarding the researcher area, Collins and Hussey (2003, 103) argue that researchers have to be careful that they do not become victims of information overloads where they can spend long time searching for irrelevant information from the internet. The internet was used to retrieved up-to-date information as well achieves relating to the researcher areas. The researcher was aware of information bias and information overload as the main disadvantage of using the internet. As a result of this, Web address from newsgroups, companies' Web pages and established search engines were the only ones used.

4.2.2.5 Reliability and Validity

Collins and Hussey (2003, 103) argue that four experiments are commonly used to establish the quality of a case study research. The four experiments are constructed validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. As Collins and Hussey (2003, 103) elaborate, reliability and validity are critical issues in qualitative research since the measures of the reliability may offer procedures rather than end results. Validity in the same way should focus on extracting rich data from explanations and analysis. Internal validity tests concern explanatory cases studies in which only the study with casual relationships is studied. From the results of the discussion of this case study, the study is explanatory by nature which means that internal and external validity tests are not relevant to and thus not applied

The case study consists of tour and Travel Company categorized under the tourism sector. The study is reliable and the data of this study is based on the data was gathered from the interview

5 CASE STUDY COMPANY

Kenya Safaris and Tours began operations on 15th January, 2006 and provide safari adventures, sport and travel packages to planning to travel or going for holidays to Kenya. The Kenya Safari

and Tours majority of customers are from Europe and the United States of America, though the highest numbers of customers are particularly from the United Kingdom. The founders and employees of Kenya Safaris and Tours are experienced travel-industry professionals and passionate about what Kenya Safaris and Tours promotes and offers.

5.1 A glance at the Kenya tourism

Kenya recorded the highest number of tourists' arrivals ever at 1,095,945 tourists as at 31st December, 2010. This was a 15% growth compared to the 952,481 experienced in 2009. This figure excludes the cross border tourists' arrivals which could add up to another approximately 700,000 tourists once the results are fully tallied by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. The 2010 Tourism performance has surpassed the 2007 record by 4.5 percent the later being the best recorded year in terms of tourist arrivals and earnings. "This performance is impressive and is optimistic to achieving Kenya's vision target of 2 million international tourists by 2012 the sector has earned \$1.8 billion in terms of revenue earnings within the same period. This is the highest tourist revenue ever recorded and it represents an impressive growth of revenue by 18 percent compared to the 2009 revenues. (Ministry of Tourism Kenya 2010)

The Kenya tourism board said the performance was impressive and the sector has shown great resilience in spite of the local and global challenges. The board accrued the impressive performance to aggressive marketing in the new markets and efficient utilization of the resources available. Kenya Tourist Board has continued to reposition the destination since 2009 as a high value for high spending tourists and this is paying good dividends. The table below gives a complete Kenya tourism statistics for visitor arrival and departures by purpose of visit. (Ministry of Tourism Kenya 2010)

Table 3; Visitor's arrival and departures by purpose of visit

ARRIVALS					DEPARTURES			
Year/ Quarter	Holiday	Business	Visitors in	00	Holiday	Business	Visitors in	00
	Visitors	Visitors	Transit	Total	Visitors	Visitors	Transit	Total
1996	795.7	100.5	55.8	952	785.7	99.2	59.5	944.4
1997	820.8	103.7	56.2	980	800.5	101.1	57.5	959.1
1998	804.8	101.7	72.3	978.8	744.3	94.0	66.2	904.5
1999	686.9	86.8	101.9	875.6	672.9	85.0	91.9	849.8
2000	746.9	94.4	107.4	948.7	746.5	93.7	106.4	946.6
2001	778.2	98.3	138.5	1,015	772.2	97.0	103.5	972.7
2002	728.8	92.1	152.6	973.5	742.0	93.2	134.1	969.3
2003	732.6	86.6	163.3	895.99	744.6	93.4	153.6	991.6
2004	684.0	182.1	219.1	1,085.2	606.6	164.1	198.4	969.1
2004	885.6	246.4	162.2	1,294.2	856.2	255.8	147.9	1,259.9
2005	1,063.2	206.1	79.8	1,349.1	1,027.1	201.6	71.6	1,300.3
2006	1,087.5	226.2	137.2	1,450.9	1,077.9	219.5	116.8	1,414.2
2008	1,278.5	242.2	130.9	1,651.6	1,232.0	232.3	124.6	1,588.9
2009	936.1	109.4	62.0	1,107.5 0	891.7	108.9	65.2	1,065.8
2010	1,061.2	180.6	98.4	1,340.2	1,064.9	169.3	97.4	1,331.6

Source; (Ministry of Tourism Kenya 2009)

5.2 Statistics

The research found that the travel and tourism market is generally categorized as Business and leisure travel. The tourism market is however separated into domestic and international tourist. Domestic tourist comprise individuals from the specified country who purchase holiday packages in their country where international tourists comprise individuals from other nationalities purchasing holiday packages in other countries apart from their country. In Kenya, domestic tourist account for approximately 23% of industry revenues with international tourist accounting for 77%. Business travelers are usually divided into two categories, the medium-to-large corporate account, and the small independent businessman. Leisure travelers are classified according to the types of packages they purchase, income, or age. (Ministry of Tourism Kenya 2006)

For Kenya safaris and tours, the company has four primary safari travel groups that constitute, adventure, special-interest, honeymoons and sightseeing (short safaris) expeditions, high-income travelers, budget-conscious travelers and families, students and seniors

In Kenya tourist industry, adventure safaris travel generate approximately €0.3 billion of the approximately €0.5 billion- annual industry revenues. € 0.1-0.15 billion of these revenues is accounted from UK markets. Based on these and other figures, Kenya Safaris and Tours estimated UK safaris travel, markets to be worth approximately € 100 million annually. (Ministry of Tourism Kenya 2006)

5.2.1 Market demographics

Kenya Safaris travel is categorized under the leisure travel category. Safari travel is sub category of leisure and can be further sub categorized into long and short adventure travel. Both long and short adventures might involve physical and athletic activities. Long adventure safari activities, as then name suggests, generally involve long duration of traveling in the wildness where short safaris activities are always short in duration and cheaper compared to long safaris.

Safaris travelers are more likely to be new couples or old couples. Kenya Safaris and Tours' primary customers are married couples, ages 25-35 with children and household income over \$

50,000. Kenya safari and Tours is planned to be located in the UK. (Kenya Safaris and Tours 2006)

The Wild animals in the natural habitat, beautiful scenarios and sunny beaches attract many safari-oriented individuals. Per capita the UK has more people than any other nation who actively participate in, the Kenya safaris, such as mountain climbing, hunting safaris, honeymoons packages etc. These are the people in Kenya Safaris and tours market. Kenya Safaris and tours should focus on the sale and promotion of safaris travel primarily to individual through the use of social media. And social media marketing strategies so has to be more successful. (Kenya Safaris and Tours 2006)

5.2.2 SWOT analysis

The following four sections of the SWOT analysis was obtained from the interviews contacted on the case company and are the most relevant issues to Kenya Safaris and Tours successful operation. From the research it can be outline that Kenya Safaris and Tours strengths include its management, experienced staff, marketing knowledge and targeted focus. Kenya Safaris and Tours should capitalize on these and other strengths to take advantage of opportunities and manage treats. The Kenya Safaris and tours weaknesses are primarily those inherent in a growing venture are discussed in one of the following sections. (Kenya Safaris and Tours 2006)

5.2.2.1 Strengths

Strengths in this perspective are an internal capability or factor that can help support the organization in achieving its objective. Kenya Safaris and Tours strengths are

- Management: Kenya Safaris and Tours manager has a successful record in this industry. His experience and the network of valuable connections he has developed should contribute to Kenya Safaris and Tours' success.
- Location: Kenya Safaris &Tours is ideally located. Kenya is a popular destination with safari enthusiasts who make Kenya Safaris and Tours target audience profile. The company is also located in the UK which accounts most of the highest numbers of safari travelers to Kenya.

- Experienced staff: Kenya Safaris and Tours team is experienced in the travel business and in adventure safaris. Most members have over three years experience. Moreover, the members are willing to spend extra time and effort to build a successful business. In addition with the intangible benefits derived from succeeding in an independent endeavor, Kenya Safaris & Tours is ready to offer profit sharing and potential partnership opportunities to its employees.
- Popularity of safari travel: safari activities are very popular, and Kenya safaris and tours is aware that the popularity will continue to grow, Many of the safaris activities such as mountain climbing, honeymoon safaris, and game viewing, have had family connections for many years where families tend to go for safaris after they have been recommended by members of the family who have been on safari.

5.2.2.2 Weaknesses

A weakness is an internal capability or factor that may hinder the organization from achieving its objectives or effectively handling opportunities and threats. Kenya Safaris and Tours weaknesses are:

- Start-Up status: Kenya Safaris and Tours is a start up business where most of start up companies tends not to perform well.
- Limited personnel: Though Kenya Safaris and Tour staff are exceptional, but from the research it shows that the workers had to work long hours with little pays.
- Financing: Preliminary estimates of sales and expenditures suggest that Kenya Safaris and Tours will remain financially stable. However, unforeseen expenditures or poor sales will threaten company's cash position, which will be partially vulnerable during the introduction of social media marketing into the company's operation

5.2.2.3 Opportunities

Opportunities are external circumstances or factors that Kenya Safaris and Tours can attempt to exploit for higher results. Kenya Safaris and Tours opportunities are:

- Growth market: The Kenya tourism industry is growing 8%annully, and preliminary estimates suggest that the UK market is part of that growth rate.
- Potential to achieve sales from the UK market: As Kenya Safari and Tours establishes to gains financial stability; it can begin to market its services in other markets. The company plans to begin this effort via a World Wide Web campaign (Internet) as this will help to diversify its communications efforts through the use of social media marketing
- Potential to become a premier provider: from the researcher it can be argued that Kenya Safaris and Tours have the management and staff to produce a top-quality service.
- Vertical integration: The potential to integrate services and add branches exist.

5.2.2.4 Threats

Threats are external circumstances or factors that could inhibit Kenya Safaris and Tours' performance if not considered. Kenya Safaris and Tours threats are:

- Internet and price competition: when airlines were deregulated, price competition increased. Further, the internet has provided a sales medium for business that competes on price and has also given consumers the ability to plan and arrange expedition for their own benefits. Thus, the traditional agency has greater competition.
- Local competition (existing and potential): There are no agencies in the UK region that specialize solely in Kenya safari travel. However, most of the travel agencies can book a safari expedition to Kenya. Moreover, additional Kenya safari travel specialists may follow Kenya Safaris and Tour's lead.
- Economic downturn: The strong Kenyan domestic economy has been good for the travel and tourism industry continued growth is anticipated. However, unforeseen or unanticipated economic recession would threaten Kenya Safaris and Tours' existence.

5.2.3 Competition

In the travel industry, as in other industries, there are large national chains, small home-based businesses, providers on the internet, etc. Membership numbers of travel-related associations give some indication of participants in this industry.

The Kenyan Association of tour operators (KATO) reports 500 members in Kenya, most of which are small businesses. In addition, there are many agencies not affiliated with these associations but with one or more of the approximately 30 industry associations in competition Kenya Safari and tours has UK as the main direct competitors and others are;

Thomas Cook: A German based in major towns in the UK, Thomas Cook is the most well-known and popular travel agency in the world. The company has provided safaris travel packages over the years and has successful integrated travel agency services and safari travel activities. This offers the company complete control over the entire packages. Thomas cook have the advantages of an established reputation, high-quality trips, economies of scale, and strategic alliances. However, their packages are expensive and appeal primarily to a high-income clients; they also rely on agencies in Kenya to provide services on their behalf unlike the Kenya safaris and Tours which deals directly with its clients. (Thomas cook)

Kuoni travel: The Swiss firm is traditional agency and has been in the business for more than ten years. They have gradually expanded towards becoming a holiday travel specialists even though it offers holidays in 634 countries. Kuoni's strengths are experience, reputation, and financial stability. Weakness may include high personnel, fixed dates and lack of a clear plan for future growth. (Kuoni travel)

5.2.4 Services

Kenya safaris and Tours is a full-service agency and sell standard travel agency goods and services, including airfare and travel packages. Additional include assistant with Visas. Providing access latest technology equipments and supplies, and superior offering that includes access to better than average activities, accommodation, and entrainments. The value added for Kenya Safaris and Tours offering is its knowledge and expertise, competitive rates, and specialty focus on adventure travel, which translate into increased satisfaction for the customers

5.2.5 Kenya Safaris and Tours keys to success

For Kenya Safaris and Tours to operate successfully the company has to effectively segment the UK safari travel market and other safari travelers, successfully position Kenya safari and Tours as Kenya specialists in the UK, communicate the differentiation and quality of the company offering through personal interaction and media and develop a repeat-business of loyal customers (Daily nation 2010)

5.2.6 Kenya Safaris and Tours critical issues

For Kenya Safaris and Tours to operate successfully the company needs market growth projections for the Kenyan tourist industry and for Safaris travel to be accurate, national economic conditions which are favorable to the travel industry, should not experience decline in the next five years, international conditions remains favorable for services providers and the company should be capable to produce effective , targeted communications that promote the benefits and adventure travel and Kenya safaris and Tours specialty and focus. (Daily nation 2010)

5.3 Marketing strategy

From the research, Kenya Safaris and Tours' goal of the business is to create and keep customers. The company's marketing strategy will reflect this goal as it builds its reputation in the UK region. Though Kenya Safaris and Tours operate in the travel industry, it will provide much more than travel. Company's customers are thought to spend 50 weeks of the year in an office. Kenya Safaris and Tours offers people the ability to go for holidays and remember how much they love the challenge and excitement of a safari. Kenya Safaris and Tours will promote the benefits and safari travel. These benefits include excitement, personal experience and lots of fun. Kenya Safaris and Tours will also promote the benefits of its services. These benefits include saving time and money, and confidence in successful vacation.

Kenya Safaris and Tours is a travel agency that specializes in Kenya safari travel. The company provides consulting and customized travel arrangements and packages. Kenya Safaris and Tours mission is to become the foremost provider of Kenya safari travel packages to the people of United Kingdom. Company employees and owner are safari enthusiasts, as well as safari travel-

industry professionals. Kenya Safaris and Tours seeks to connect Kenya safari travel newcomers and veterans with services providers, adventure activities, and accommodation that match the client's desires and budget level.

5.3.1 Marketing objectives

Kenya safaris and Tours marketing plan hope to achieve an, annual growth rate of at least 10%, promote Kenyan safaris travel activities through strategic alliance with hotel, department of Kenya tourism board, and other foreign own travel agencies, archived 45% of sales through the internet thus becoming the market leader of safari travel provider in the UK region.

5.3.2 Target market

Target market involves targeting one segment with one marketing mix. It helps the organization understand one segment of customers rather than spending organization resources across multiple marketing activities for multiple segments. From the research, Kenya Safari's and Tours aim to target the following groups:

- Couples and individuals safaris adventure travelers: This is the customers group that meets the demographic profile for safari travelers. They are age 25-35 married and with household income greater than \$ 40,000.
- Group's adventure travelers: These are groups that belong to some travel organizations and always as a group to different destinations.
- Corporate adventure travelers: Kenya Safaris and Tours will target UK business in an attempt to secure corporate accounts

Kenya Safaris and Tours should plan to focus its initials efforts on the safari travel market in the UK regions. As Kenya Safaris and Tours grow, market efforts can be expanded to other markets. The major purchasers that match Kenya Safaris and Tours target market are located in urban areas within big UK cities.

5.3.3 Positioning

Positioning helps create a compressively distinctive position for a service in the minds of targeted customers. For individuals and corporate clients who wish to participate in safari travel, Kenya Safaris and Tours should be positioned as the premier safari travel agency in the UK regions. Kenya Safaris and Tours experience with enthusiasm for safari adventure travel should be displayed in the exceptional services, value, and advice it provides for the customer. It is however that the company understands that positioning is a decision to; make frequently since markets and customers are not always the same and the company must be prepared to reposition its services if necessary for desirability and deliverability

5.3.4 Market mix

Kenya Safaris and Tours must allocate the promotion budget over to the five promotion tools: advertising, sales promotion, public relations, sales force and direct marketing. It is however important to note an organization, can spend more on some promotion tools if is perceived that the specified promotion tools will have a major impact compared to other promotion tools.

Kenya Safaris and Tours should employ a wider advertising communications and promotion to achieve its marketing goals. Research on the demographics of Kenya Safaris and tours target market suggest that the most effective communication will be come through advertising in several specialty publications and via local media. In addition, direct interaction or promotion at shopping malls, Exhibitions and other should be part of the company's marketing mix.

Kenya Safaris and Tours sell travel agency goods and services including airfare and travel packages. Additional services will include assistance with tourist visas applications to Kenya, providing access to latest technology equipment and supplies, and a superior offering that includes access to better than average safaris activities, accommodations, and entrainment. The value added of Kenya Safaris and Tours offering is its knowledge and expertise, complete rates, and specialty focus on Kenya safari adventure travel, will mean increased assurance and satisfaction for the customer. The company's initiative to focus on Kenya safaris adventure travel was made because economic indicators suggest that an increased demand for Kenya n safaris adventure travel services exists. The UK region does not have solely Kenyan safari adventure

travel specialists, and members of the company team are experienced and enthusiastic about safari adventure travel activities. It is hoped that this enthusiasm will be communicated to the customers and Kenya Safaris and Tours experience will result to satisfaction and repeat business.

The concept of integrated marketing communication suggests that a company has to blend the promotion tools carefully into a coordinated promotion mix. Companies within the same industry differ greatly in the design of their promotion mixes. Organizations mainly use promotion strategy to communicate with their customers and other stakeholders. During Kenya safaris and Tours first year of operation, the company will hold an opening event and organize several programmes. At the opening event the company will provide literature information about trips and activities. Negotiations with Kenyan department of tourism and hotels in Kenya have begun and additional promotion will likely occur through these strategic alliances. Specialty rather than national publication should serve as media vehicles for Kenya Safaris and Tours advertising. Local radio station could also be used for promotion purpose. Personal selling could also occur, through telemarketing should be avoided. Kenya Safaris and Tours plans to occasionally station personnel in locations around UK and other parts, such as shopping malls. The organization's goal is to develop personal familiarity between its employees and the community.

6 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

This section focused on the company's results in the use of social media as a marketing tool and the suggestion for the case company in use of social media.

6.1 Questionnaires and findings

In this research, the author conducted the interviews by designing questionnaires which consist (Appendix 1) which contains 10 which were actually based on the company's use of social media tools and (Appendix 2) which contains 8 questions which were based on the company's employees on the use of social media to market tourism.

The author conducted the interview with assistant director of the Kenya safaris and tours the main focused of the interview was actually to examine and find out if the company uses social media tools in marketing tourism. The interview also when further to finds out the company's benefits in using social media. The director was also ask to give an account of what audience does it reached via the use of social media and what are the problem that is associated with the social media tools. Finally was to find out if the use of social media has met the company's business goals.

Another interview was also conducted between groups of 8 people working in the case company age 25-45. This was actually focused on the company's employees and the main reason was to find out what responsibilities to they play in marketing the case company via use of social media. The number of years they have been in the company and how to they handle their customers complains was also focused on. The target audience for their company and what kind of strategies are they employing in order to cope up with growing competition. Finally was to find out how social media has help to position the case company in order to achieved it marketing objectives

6.1.1 Social media for Kenya Safari and Tours

According to the research answers, applying social media is quite a new thing for the tourism enterprises in their business. Most of these tourism enterprises include only one to three persons taking all of business operations. Therefore, new ways of marketing might be a challenge for them. Knowledge, time and capability to use social media are factors should be taken into account. In addition, the use of social media in tourism businesses depends on firm's target group which is one of the most important elements in marketing.

The research went further by stating that social media can accomplish the traditional marketing. Nowadays more and more people found information on internet and decided to book a hotel after reading many complimentary comments about it for example. Therefore, social media reaches the customers faster and targeted. The results obtained suggested three social media sites for the Kenya Safari and Tours and these are Facebook, YouTube and Twitter

Furthermore, in a new era of online communication social media has influenced on consumer behaviour. They are empowered more than ever in making purchasing decisions. Social media let people speak out loud their thoughts on something they had interacted with. They turn out to find social content from social media outlets to plan of their travel.

Consumers increasingly read feedback of other travellers and compare the prices of service offering because they felt trustworthy of the peer's opinions. This changes significantly way of business. It means when your company receiving a lot of negative feedback on social media site, then you sure losing your customers.

6.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages

Applying social media in business particularly in tourism enterprises does bring advantages and disadvantages in use.

From the research it shows that if the tourism business has the knowledge and capability of using social media; it will give a cheap way of marketing especially for current and topical things such as offers, events and packages

It also shows that social media is very fast in reaching customers with large scale of influence. If a company can realize influencers within the online community and stimulate them to brag about the company's brand then it will certainly earn attention from the customers.

Customer service is mentioned as an advantage of social media. It is very easy to interact with customers through social networking site. Whenever they raise a complaint about your company, you will get back to comfort your customers at anytime without geographical obstacle.

The feedback also shows that social media helps in finding out who are leading in the market through their comments on these social platforms. Understanding of competitors can be also examined. Moreover, it is useful to predict the trend of customers on what they like and what they expect from the company.

After finding out the advantages of social media it is important also to note its drawbacks. Social media are considered effective in approaching customers and spreading information really fast with huge impact. It is one of its advantages but also its disadvantage. If bunch of negative

comments arrive to the company's social media site or any misrepresentation is spreading very fast which will definitely ruin the company's image and getting out of control. Because of that, keeping track on customers is required to be implemented. However, it is considered as time-consuming and the results of marketing through social media do not come out after one or two days but taking months or even years. The research also stated that when a tourism company considers using social media as their marketing strategy, should improve skills of staff.

6.1.3 Social media target customers for Kenya Safari and Tours

The research also establishes to find out the target customers that the tourism business can reach through social media and it shows that customers' age is very important thing. Younger and middle-aged people use information technology, not older people. However, target customers are determined depending on what the company is selling. If you are selling group packages for senior citizens, author think that social media is not the best way for marketing.

6.1.4 Social media site for Kenya Safari and Tours

A company profile is evaluated as one of most important attributes. The information providing on social media sites helps to increase more selling. From the interview different opinions were obtained on how tourism company's profile on social media sites should have in order to attract visitors and to get higher engagement from them. The responses from the interviews were dominated by two following suggestions:

In the company's social media site, it should especially have current and topical news and offers. Up-to-date information is welcomed by travelers because it plays as information sources for their traveling plan.

Besides that, packaging is one of the major option and great way to drive attention of customers towards the company's social media site. Packaging is a concept of services and accommodation combination. For example, the company offers a sale of holiday tour including airfare and hotel accommodation without booking separately from different websites. This is also an effective way to get high possibility of reservation of target customers for those packaging services.

6.2 Social media suggestions for Kenya Safaris and Tours

The social media suggestions for the case company were mainly to determine its objectives and the appropriate social media tools for the case company as well as finding out other ways of strengthening the use of social media marketing in the tourism business.

6.3 Determining an objective

In any business, a marketing objective plays an important role to outline what is to be accomplished by the company. Setting an objective is to determine an effective marketing strategy which in turn brings the best outcome.

Objectives of using social media might be to build awareness, to increase website visits, to increase ranking on search engine or to attract potential customers. According to analysis in other chapter, author suggest the objectives in the case of Kenya Safaris and Tours are improving the local residents' awareness as well as people from other parts of Kenya, attracting a stable number of new customers and increasing website traffic. The reasons of setting those objectives are explained as following:

- Majority of visitors coming for safaris are from local municipal and they form as visit groups.
- In order to expand the image of Kenya safaris and Tours, taking care of visitors from different places is necessary to accomplish.
- Getting new customers to raise the service's sales is important.

6.4 Appropriate social media tools for Kenya Safari and Tours

The primary research is shown under two different points of view of social media users and a tourism specialist. The responses of answerers had described the customers' needs and expectations of social media use. Moreover, the expert recommendations helped to choose appropriate social media outlets for Kenya Safaris and Tours. Making sure to apply the right social media channels is a decisive factor because not all social media tools are suitable for all business lines, especially in the tourism sector.

The appropriate social media tools for Kenya Safari and Tours is shown in the table below. The list can be change according to the changes of marketing objective and marketing strategy at certain periods.

Table 4; List of social media tools for Kenya Safaris and Tours

Social media channel	Description
Facebook	A social networking site was founded in 2004. It allows people to keep up with friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos. The site has more than 19 million members. This helps the case company to post and share the available information about their safaris
Wikipedia	Wikipedia is a free encyclopedia that anyone can edit the content. The site attracts nearly 78 million visitors monthly as of January 2010. This site is recommended because it is one of the largest reference websites people come to search for information. Wikipedia makes it easy for people to such and find the company information and what they offer.
Youtube	YouTube is the world’s most popular online video community. The company could post some videos about various safaris which will attract those who look at them.

Source: (Author’s own construction)

An online search on Google was conducted to research whether Kenya Safaris and Tours have its official profile or related-upload articles on the above social media channels. The results were shown that the company did have its profile on Facebook and other social media sites however very basic information was uploaded. The information of the company on Facebook site is copied the same as on other social media sites making no differences and attraction to the audiences. Consequently, the profile of the company should be improved on Facebook. Writing new related articles in Tripadvisor and uploading photos and videos are being considered as next steps for Kenya Safaris and Tours to consider

6.5 Attracting visitors and strengthening the social media objectives

More fanpage or higher rate of visitors to the social media sites of Kenya Safaris and Tours means more people are being attracted by the company. It thereby helps to raise the traveler's awareness of Kenya Safaris and Tours.

The content on social media sites is requisite for its site traffic increase. From the received answers of the interview, many opinions are given. The visitors of the Safaris are expected to see travelling tips and lots of photos besides basic information. In addition, the social media site of the company should not have old photography and exaggerated text but being a space in which people can freely talk about what they think of Kenya Safaris and Tours or even anything about travelling experiences of them.

The author opinion, Kenya Safaris and Tours should provide on its official Facebook of online virtual tour which give a lively insight into the Safaris and attract new visitors.

Strengthening the social engagement of people on the social media sites of the Safaris can be accomplished through different ways. On Facebook, Kenya Safaris and Tours may increase the contribution of the visitors by organizing a contest for unprofessional photographers, for instance, with the Safaris-related themes. This not only satisfies members on Facebook with such good photographs but also gives chances for people getting to know about Kenya Safaris and Tours. Kenya Safaris and Tours should also create its account on Flickr and upload those received photographs on the site, and direct the link to other social media sites.

Effectively social media is a new way of marketing for tourism companies. However, it is unable to deny that traditional still plays a very important role in marketing strategy of a business. Therefore, even making the presence on social media site but Kenya Safaris and Tours should use the local networks to connect with people around has this will also helps to promote the company's safaris package and also the Kenya Safaris and Tours should make sure that all the infrastructure leading to all safaris places are in good condition as this will also raise the number of people going for safaris.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Social media has become a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with internet access. Increased communication for organizations fosters brand awareness and better customer service and therefore the aim of this thesis was to find out the importance of using social media in marketing tourism.

It is also to address the opportunities for Kenya Safaris and Tours in Kenya for applying social media in order to achieve its business goals. The research question was, therefore to find out how tourism companies are integrating social media into marketing so as to boost awareness and generate excitement about tourism destination.

The use of social media in advertising Kenya Safari and Tours boost awareness and generate tourism destination to various safari visitors. Social media is made up with various platforms of social media submission sites, media sharing sites, forums and discussion sites, review and rating sites, social networking sites, blogs, podcasts, micro-blogging and wikis. All this social media platforms contribute a lot in marketing tourism business as well as boosting awareness about various destinations that the company offers.

Rapidly growing social media have influenced the online consumer behavior. Particularly in tourism, travelers are on their own initiative when coming to information searching and purchase decision-making. In the general view of tourism business, social media is being embraced in relating to marketing and service, consist of identifying and attracting new customers, increasing brand awareness and connecting with customers.

The qualitative research showed the users of social media have not understood these social media channels very well and still restrictive in the use of social media for tourism purposes. The most familiar tool is social networking site Facebook. Some others were mentioned such as Wikipedia, YouTube, and Twitter.

The thesis comes to the conclusion that the use of social media in tourism businesses, especially in tourism sector encompassing both advantages and disadvantages. The target customers of social media outlets are determined depending on what kinds of services the tourism companies are offering. However, the young people are considered as the main users of social media channels while old people hesitate to try new technology.

When applying social media in marketing Kenya Safaris and Tours there are some recommendations should be considered. Firstly, there has to be setting up an objective for Kenya Safaris and Tours what it wants to receive from social media. The objective might consist of increasing the local awareness, attracting new customers and improving Kenya Safaris and Tours official website traffic.

To benefit the social media outlets with positive return Kenya Safari and Tours should also attract more visitors to its social media sites and stimulate their engagement by posting up-to-date information or organizing any online activities for customers and finally the writing of this thesis work was a great learning experience for the author a lot of knowledge concerning the concept of using social media in marketing tourism was acquired while writing the thesis.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Kenya Safari and Tours use of social media tools

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Appendix 1

Kenya Safari and Tours use of social media tools

1. Does your tourism company use social media tools?
2. What benefits have the tourism company archived in using this social media marketing technologies?
3. Why did your company choose to use social media tools in marketing the tourism industry?
4. Have you identified any business advantage of using social media blogs such as facebook, twitter, youtube and linkedin over traditional media in marketing your tourism company?

Yes

No

(If yes, please specify)

5. How does your tourism company gauge the use of social media marketing technology?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Good
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor
6. What resources have your company applied to social media technologies?
7. Please describe any problem that may have surface from the use of social media technologies in marketing your company?
8. What audience does this tool allow you to reach?
[general public, agency employees, customers/clients, all of the above, other – open text]

9. Has this tool met your business goals?

[yes, no, I don't know]

10. How broadly is this technology being used in your agency?

[1-5 separate uses, 6-20 separate uses, more than 20 separate uses]

Appendix 2

Kenya safari and Tours Employees

1. What position and duties do you play in marketing Kenya Safaris and Tours by use of social media?
2. How long have you been working with the company?
3. How do you handle customers complains?
4. What is your target audience?
5. What factors are you employing to cope up with the growing competition from other firms?
6. What are the marketing tips and tools do your company use to enhance sufficient market trends, market needs and market growth?
7. Do you find the use of social media in position the company successful?
8. Has the company benefit in using social media to achieve its marketing objectives?