Fall 9-28-2016

The Influence of Time of Day on Traveler Website Conversions

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The level of alertness varies at different times of day (Schmidt, Collette, Cajochen, and Peigneux 2007) due to fluctuations in processing resources (Shiv, and Fedorikhin 1999). To simplify the decision-making process at non-optimal times of day, that is when processing resources are at their lowest, consumers rely on stereotypes (Bodenhausen 1990) and other heuristics (Yoon 1997). As a result, they are also more likely to produce automatic, unconscious responses in these off-peak time periods (May, Hasher, and Foong 2005), making them more susceptible to marketing tactics (Chebat, Limoges, and Gelinas-Chebat 1997).

It is thus important to consider time of day to optimize the "synchrony effect" which represents a match between consumers "performance periods" (May, Hasher, and Stoltzfus 1993) and, for instance, the time at which an advertisement is displayed, in order to optimize its effect.

Through the analysis of the Quebec City Tourism website, the effect of the time of the day of the visits on visitor conversions, which represent the attainment of specific objectives, will be investigated.

The presentation will shed light on the most likely time of day for specific conversions, including time spent on the website, click-through rate, searches on the website (activities, accommodation availability, etc.), content views, etc. It will also demonstrate how conversions vary according to the time zones and to the country of origin of the website visitors.

Indeed, it is important for destination management organizations and other tourism organizations to optimize the cognitive processing of information by website visitors. It contributes to the destination "coming alive" through the website, in the eyes of visitors. It also helps potential tourists move along in their customer journey by getting them closer to visiting the destination.

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