

MARKETING CONSULTANCY IN AGROTOURISM ALONG THE ROMANIAN WEB SITES

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Abstract:

This study assumed that the interest in agrotourism was increased in the last years of financial crisis. This paper is the result of Internet searches aimed at finding specialized companies and useful in agrotourism marketing and consulting.

Key words: *agrotourism, Romania, marketing, Internet, consulting*

JEL classification: L83

Agrotourism is a concept built around sustainable development of small communities. People in rural areas are able to exploit natural resources in their own benefit, making a tourism through which customers can know aspects of village life and enjoyment of contact with nature and its beauty.

For Romania, the development potential of tourism is particularly high. This is given as the beauties of nature and the customs and folk traditions:

- The climate with four seasons, each seasons highlights the natural beauty of our country;
- Beauties of the rivers valleys who cross from the to the Danube and Black Sea;
- The Danube Delta - unique in Europe;
- Vast forests accompanied by rich pastures and meadows;
- Special greatness of the Carpathians and the Carpathian foothills;
- Ruins, fortresses, castles, churches, and monasteries are slices of our country's history and civilization;
- Traditional gourmet dishes are very popular in both domestic for Romanian tourists and foreign tourists.

The guesthouses have limited power and resources while battling today's challenges (big hotels, large camping spaces), when changes all around them occur at an overwhelming rate. Because untaken rooms are fragile assessments, hospitality providers must have the best maintenance program. This program implies a robust "system" for client relations management, good client or potential client communication, native or foreign. This does not necessarily mean the use of software, even if it is cheap.

Even the local Romanian market may constitute the main source of visitors; the recent studies show that Romanians have become more challenging about their destinations. Foreigners may be attracted by the originality, ancestral tradition and „wilderness" of our country.

How can agro-touristic hosts find attractions suitable for Romanian tourists as well as foreigners? We can assume that they need to turn to advisors and special programs. However, most of them cannot afford to pay for a consultant. Even they could, how can they find touristic agro-touristic specialists? A well-known helper is the largest network and its tools: the Internet and the search engines. Of course, it may be that users do not know anything about government programs (the Government programs are held around the axes and measure/măsură). Table 1 shows the results for various searches exclusively among Romanian web pages. As seen in Table 1, the results for the

following strings seem suitable for initial research: *agroturism*, *"marketing turistic" consultanta*, *marketing agroturism consultanta* and *turism marketing*.

Attempts to find a more proper word combination in order to search for advisors were successful, even the phrasing varies depending on specifics, like: *marketing "turism rural" consultant*. Other word combination generated week result. Some examples are: 1 result for *marketing "turism agroturistic" expertiza*, 2 results for *marketing "turism agroturistic" consultanta*. In this conditions, to find an advisor became a hard job. In this paper we take into account the combination of words *marketing agroturism consultanta*.

Table 1

Internet search results

Search string	Number of results
Turism	40,200,000
Agroturism	1,310,000
turism marketing	8,890,000
"turism marketing"	44,300
"marketing turism"	58,200
marketing turistic	478,000
"marketing turistic"	92,600
marketing agroturistic	105,000
"marketing agroturistic"	2,080
"marketing turistic" consultanta	3,990,000
marketing agroturism consultanta	3,920,000
pensiuni agroturistice	231,000
"pensiuni turistice"	407,000
marketing "pensiuni agroturistice"	764,000
expertiza "pensiuni agroturistice"	57,300
consultanta "pensiuni turistice"	931,000
turism rural	415,000
"turism rural"	319,000
marketing "turism rural"	865,000

Fortunately, Web pages dedicated to tourism marketing consultancy arise from the first page of results. However the first two results are links to a portal "ghiddeafaceri.ro" where the visitor cannot extract too much information. According bad habits, the description is brief, without useful links, discouraging the reader. Do not forget that this information be presented to people dealing with rural tourism and agrotourism.

The next result is a link to the blog at <http://www.finantare-proiecte.ro/blogul>. Information provided by this page is about: young farmers, farm modernization, improving the economic value of forests, adding value to agricultural and forestry products, support for semi-subsistence farms, establishment of producer groups, first afforestation of agricultural land , support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises and encouragement of tourism activities.

In addition to providing information about Holda Finance Company providing complete consulting services for beneficiaries who want to access European funds through PNDR (Programul Național de Dezvoltare Rurală – National Rural Development Program) program in 2012. For this company, the visitors get a contact form to request advice and dedicated page for contact. Sections useful for agrotourism are dedicated to support the creation and development of micro-enterprises and encouragement of tourism activities.

The next result is a link to a site with a promising name for a connoisseur of English: <http://www.pos-consultancy.com>. This web site is a company specialized in consultancy for European funds, grants. At first sight, it is obvious that the site is a new

site, located at the beginning. However, it is a well-structured site with various features such as quick selection of the subject of interest, newsletters, connection to an account (username and password are required), dynamic list of recent searches and services list. Visitors may select from several languages (English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, and Hungarian). Who knows axes and measures of government programs will quickly discover key words and acronyms.

The next result is a link to a site with a promising name: <http://consultanta-proiecte-eu.ro>. Here the communication with visitors is simple: it is presented the subject with brief descriptions, and, at the bottom of the page, an application form is available. Available sections come to help a novice: European programs, bank financing, special financing, news/information. Also, visitors can register to newsletters.

For the third page, the next result is a link to <http://www.2000lch.ro>. The site is rich and well-structured, communication with visitors being well planned: register as a user, map to the company, various possibilities of contact. Unfortunately, the necessary documents page is under construction - which is an element of uncertainty, being able to take out the visitor. Portfolio is the most important asset in attracting the potential customers. Rich customer lists are enumerated chronologically, grouped by government programs.

The next result is a link to <http://agro-consultanta.ro/agroturism.html>. The site name is chosen according to the requirements of online marketing. The visitor can use the search engine to find information about topics of interest. Elements that can attract visitors can be: the list of the latest news, archives, press releases, the "Advice" (*Consultanta*) section. Unfortunately, everything stops somewhere in 2011, the archive was built only for 2010. This site seems an abandoned project.

The fourth page of results starts repeating previous results, which will stop looking less experienced user.

Finding specialists in consulting in tourism is a difficult enterprise. Subject does not appear among the result sought which proves that sites were not constructed in a manner effective for Internet search engines. Since the problems of Romanian tourism are high, the approach of this paper is further evidence that Romania is still present lack of professionalism at all levels and areas related to rural tourism or agroturism. Even after 22 years still find that we are novices in areas that should be already well developed. Of course, apparently, everyone is struggling but the results, even at first glance, are not those expected.

We believe that there is no real interest in tourism development. Only the existence of sites very often disappointing, and the existence of dedicated portals to hotels and guesthouses, is not enough. It is imperative that expert voices to be heard and the Internet. It is imperative that this expert discovery to be made, faster, encouraging rural visitors who are less tired of the vastness of the Internet.

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