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PROMOTION TOOLS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

– Case study: Tourism promotion in Troyes and
Turku through Instagram



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PROMOTION TOOLS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY - CASE STUDY: TOURISM PROMOTION IN TROYES AND TURKU THROUGH INSTAGRAM.

Some people might say that the tourism industry is at its highest point with a total of 1.24 billion of tourists in 2016 in the whole world. However, thanks to many technologies advances and a stability of the prices, we can expect from that industry a stable growth and development.

Social media platforms are part of our lives: whether to give news to our family, talk to our friends, organize an event or just scroll through the feed of Facebook, Instagram or YouTube. It has such an impact on our life that brands started to use those to touch a larger audience and therefore maximize the profits. However, we can ask ourselves how that is conducted and what is the true influence on the audience.

The aim of that study is to conduct an analysis of the Instagram accounts of two chosen cities (Troyes and Turku) and compare them to observe how the tourism offices of these towns are trying to attract potential tourists. We will be able to obtain reliable information that will allow us to determine the importance of social media platforms in the tourism promotion nowadays.

Keywords: Tourism, Troyes, Turku, Marketing, Strategy, Social Media, Instagram, Communication, Tool.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, tourism is a phenomenon that is available to anyone. Whether staying in the home country or taking the decision to go abroad, most people will try to discover the mysteries of the region they are in for their holidays.

The tourism industry has developed tremendously in the last decade as shown by the graph below of Our World in Data. In 2008, there was a total of 916.7 million of tourists in comparison to 1.24 billion in 2016. The tourism industry is in constant evolution, it is not slowing down, and the World Tourism Organization estimated the number of tourists in 2017 at 1.32 billion, which is a growth of 7% for the number of tourist arrivals compared to 2016.

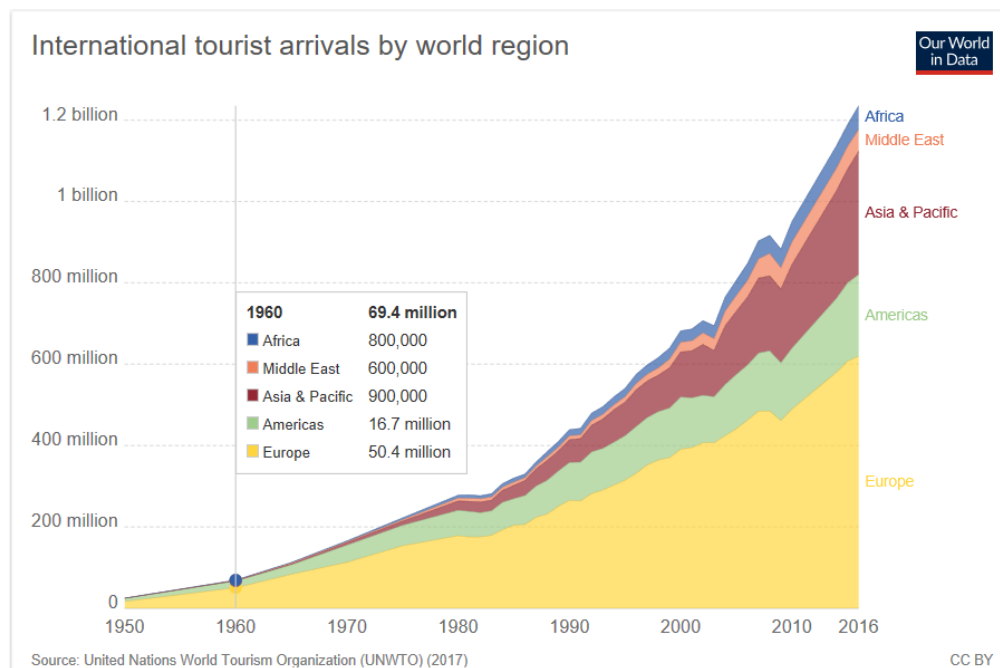


Figure 1: International tourist arrivals by world region (UNWTO, 2017) Even though the number for 2018 has not yet been published, it is expected to keep growing at a rate of 4-5% (UNWTO, 2017).

Thanks to social media platforms, the development of online travel agencies and the low-cost airlines, people have access to destinations they could not dream to visit only a few years back. Tourism, as explained by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), comprises the activities of persons traveling to places outside their usual environment, and staying there for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.

The tourism industry can have a significant effect on the economy of the country: France is the most visited country in the world with 87 million of visitors in 2017 (UNTWO 2018), and it is estimated that in 2016 the French government gained 42,5 billion Dollar out of tourism visitors. That industry represented in the same year 7,3% of the French GDP (Pflimlin E., March 2018). The tourism industry has an impact on the countries' economy if the destination is well-known of tourists, but the realization that France was depending consequently on it brought questions after reading Edouard Pflimlin's article. It raised a curiosity about Finland. Not surprisingly, the number of tourists is 29 times lower than in France: 3,2 million tourists travelled to Finland in 2017 (UNTWO, 2018), which allowed the Finnish government to receive 3,6 billion Euro in 2016 and contributed to 2.5% of the GDP (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2019). People now have the choice when selecting their destination but for them to know about it, there must be some information, and this is where promotion and communication are coming in.

1.1 Thesis' motivation

As an exchange student, the author had the chance to come and live for one full year in another country, and it was always clear that in addition to studying, the author was going to travel and discover the country she is currently in, as well as the countries around. It Furthermore, when she started planning trips with her friends, the author did not realize all the efforts made by the cities and countries to attract tourists at first.

While making research on the subject, it became interesting to learn how the countries, the cities and sometimes the regions were showing potential visitors what they could offer to their curious eyes, and the writer thought it could be intriguing to compare how promoting tourism is done in two different countries. In addition, social media platforms are part of our daily life and they have been included in the tourism industry as a new tool to attract people.

1.2 Troyes and Turku as our research areas

France and Finland are so different regarding economy and culture that it would not be possible to compare them on the national level. However, the regional level is more accessible. Troyes, the author's home town, is similar to Turku by many aspects: its size (range of 15 square kilometers) and its population (190 000 persons in Turku in 2016, and 170 000 in what we call the "Big Troyes") are comparable. Turku is connected to the archipelago, Troyes is with the Champagne production, and these two aspects play in favor of the regions, as this is what can gain the interest of people and potential future

tourists. However, we can say that both cities have their own culture, patrimony and history. The similarities of the cities are not only based on the statistics. On the historical part, it is done by promoting the story of Cathedral in Turku and the architecture in Troyes, which are typical of the region for each. The culture is an important part too: while Turku is trying to inspire tourists with mostly outside activities (very popular in the Finnish culture), Troyes is encouraging people to discover more about how the Champagne industry works and which importance it has for the region. While doing researches on the tourism industry, the author saw that both departments were trying to develop the recognition of the city itself, but also to develop the whole area. Turku is putting a lot of effort in developing the marketing of the Archipelago, while Troyes is including the Champagne in its whole marketing efforts with the creation of the urbanism brand called “Troyes La Champagne” (A. Marville, 2019).

As said above, Turku has 190 000 inhabitants and its population keeps growing. Turku is also considered to be a “student city”, as currently has over 40 000 students in higher education, and receives around 4000 exchange students each year, which contributes to the international side of the city with more than one hundred nationalities in 2017 (City of Turku, 2017). However, it is important to mention the archipelago of Turku: it is one of the most prolific archipelagos worldwide with a total of 20,000 islands and skerries. It leaves from Turku and is expanded all the way until reaching the Aland Islands, that are between Finland and Sweden. Even though some of these islands are mostly in their primary natural state, it is possible to have access to it and visit them by ferries, cars and even by bike. The biggest and most popular islands are adapted to welcome visitors: several hotels, restaurants and cafés are present all over the archipelago (Visit Turku, 2019). Troyes is similar: the center counts 61000 inhabitants but the whole urban area has 170 000 inhabitants. The agglomeration is also part of the development plan of the city. Troyes is also considered to be a student city as it is the first engineering pole of the whole region and the second one regarding higher education and researches. In 2018, the city had almost 11 000 students in higher education, a number which multiplied by 5 in 20 years only (Troyes, 2019).

Therefore, comparing those cities and analyzing their similarities cited a few lines up would allow us to make the link with the management of Instagram put into place in each region to benefit the tourism evolution. It would give us more specific results and allow us to compare both regions accurately.

1.3 Thesis purpose

Aiming to study the marketing strategies and specifically the tools used by the tourism offices is a difficult task as various data is required to make a complete and accurate analysis. However, finding these informations are more relevant when we narrow the geographic area to two cities (and their agglomerations) where we can do our studies directly. Focusing on these two areas is also easier for the author as it is more accessible in case more information is needed. It is also more interesting from the thesis' writer point of view as these are two cities in which the author has lived in for a consequent amount of time.

Therefore, this thesis' purpose will be to analyse how two cities like Troyes (France) and Turku (Finland) use the social media platform Instagram to promote tourism. Of course, it will allow the author to describe and show how social medias can be used as marketing tools today, and how social media impact the marketing strategies of the tourism offices cited above.

Our main questions will be:

- Which tools are used in the tourism promotion by the tourism offices of Troyes and Turku?
- How is Instagram used by the tourism offices of Troyes and Turku?

Answering these questions will allow us to give various data about the tools used by the tourism offices and how they are being managed over the period of time chosen to be studied.

1.4 Thesis' structure

Many elements need to be mentioned in this thesis. Therefore, a first part will be created to explained which theoretical elements will be used to support our thesis' questions. The methodology will follow for the reader to understand the step followed in this thesis and the tools used to make it more accurate. An empirical part will be developed in order to observe the actions of the tourism offices of Troyes and Turku on Instagram. After raising questions and observing the results, a conclusion will allow us to highlight the important point and answer clearly the questions asked in that introduction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Marketing Communications Mix

Having a successful marketing strategy is often communicated by the turnover gained by the company (Kotler & Keller, 2016). However, how can a marketing strategy be implemented and in which way? Nowadays, it is not possible to only count on one tool used by the company to build brand awareness and customer loyalty. Well-known companies are using external services (advertising companies for example) to boost their sales, by playing with many different communication tools as Mondelez International is doing for example: partnering with nine digital start-ups to gain an advantage in that area and committing 10 percent of its marketing budget on mobile (Kotler & Keller 2016, p.581).

In the business field, everyone realized already a long time ago that the development of communications means was not only useful, it could be profitable, and companies of all sorts and size are now using these different tools to promote their activities. But about which means are we talking? While some authors such as Steve Bird or Micael Dahlen (et al.) are only mentioning six major communication modes, Kotler and Keller (2016) are talking about eight of them.

First, the one that is used since the beginning of our history is advertising: it describes all the forms of non-personal promotion of goods or services via several supports: printed medias, broadcast medias, network medias, electronic medias, and display medias (Kotler & Keller 2016, p. 581). In the tourism offices of Troyes and Turku, it is represented by all the brochures that can be encountered to promote specific places to visit that are partners with the tourism offices for example.

The second one would be sales promotion, which comprises advertisement to only being a “short-term incentives to encourage trial or purchase of a product or of a service including customer promotions, trade promotions and business and sales force promotion” (Kotler & Keller 2016, p581). It encourages people to buy products, even during high season in Troyes and Turku as people are often telling themselves they are conducting a ‘good deal’.

Events and experiences also play a role in the promotion done by a company as designed activities and programs (mostly sponsored ones) are created to encourage the interactions between the customers and the brand. It can be through daily meetings organized in the shop, and through bigger events like caritative evenings or sports events for example. The “Route du Champagne” is an example of events organized each year during summer in the agglomeration of Troyes, and in which the tourism office is present as it attracts national tourists, but also international ones sometimes.

Also, public relations and publicity are important to maintain the brand image. It can pass through several programs directed internally to employees of the company and externally to consumers, other firms, governments and media (Kotler & Keller 2016, p.581). For example, SpaceX sent its new rocket into space in 2018, and that made it in the headlines of several newspapers as we know that the ultimate goal for Elon Musk, creator of SpaceX, would be to send people to Mars. However, it became even more unbelievable when the rocket freed a red-cherry Tesla into space, for it to just travel around the space and stay in orbit between Mars and Earth for the next millions of years. According, to Clifford Chi, it served “as reminder for current and future generations to always reach for the stars”. Of course, it went viral and improved the image of both brands: SpaceX and Tesla. We could say that the mentioned promotional launch improved the identify brand, which reflects how the brand is perceived in the eyes of the customers.

Direct and database marketing are an important part too: the use of emails, phone, fax or internet to communicate/dialogue with specific prospects or customer is still in use for most of the companies and it is often how is managed the customer service demands or complains. For Troyes and Turku, it is a way to answer direct questions coming from curious tourists, or potential visitors.

Personal selling is a mode of communication that is not always mentioned but it is also part of the marketing strategy as it impacts the brand image. Customers are often more receptive to face-to-face interaction as it is part of the customer experience. In our case, it would be done directly at the tourism offices, to encourage tourists to buy books or products created by the city itself.

Moreover, the online and social media marketing represents online programs and activities “designed to engage customers or prospects and directly or indirectly raise awareness, improve image, or elicit sales of products and services” (Kotler & Keller 2016,

p.581). This mode of marketing is used on several famous platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and more. Some brands are truly using it to their advantage and building their image through the posts they publish. It is the case of Oreo, who is using humor to promote its products, partnerships and even share its news. You can easily laugh at their pick-up lines such as “Keep your friends close and your cookies even closer” (M. Taheri, 2016). But then, what is the difference between online and mobile marketing? The mobile marketing is part of the online marketing: online marketing is the over-category and encompasses marketing tailored to different devices, including laptops, tablets and mobiles. Mobile marketing is a smaller entity which uses similar techniques, but only for smartphones and tablets. As Instagram is the main element studied in the thesis, it included both social media marketing and mobile marketing as Instagram is both an online application that can be used on computers, but most of the time on smaller devices such as smartphones.

All these modes can be used individually but to have an efficient marketing campaign, most companies are combining them to touch a larger panel of people, either from their chosen segments, or other new ones.

2.2 The Communications Process Models

Knowing how companies are communicating, promoting and developing their image/brand is not enough: there should be a way to analyze it too. While looking through Marketing Management (Kotler & Keller 2016, p.584), the macro-model of the communications process captures the attention of the author:

Macromodel of the Communications Process

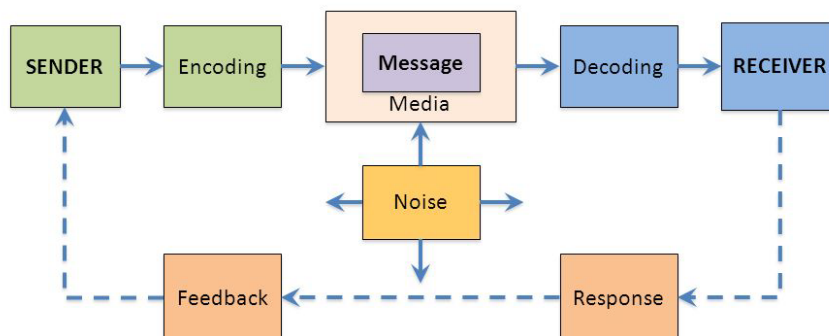


Figure 2: Macro-Model of the Communications Process (Kotler & Keller 2016, p.584).

This model allows us a large view as the information are not only coming from the receiver side (consumer of the goods/services), but also from the sender side (producer and seller of the goods/services), and how they are reacting to the response of the receivers. This model can be used each time a new communication plan, or message, is launched by companies: studying it each time and finding the results would allow the company to compare its achievements and its failures over the years to always know what changed and impacted their brand.

The message of the media itself does not only have an impact on the receiver side, but also on the sender side as it can be talked about, and the feedbacks can be both positive or negative from consumers, but also governments, competitors, professionals or associations. It will impact the way people are perceiving the brand: therefore, it represents a critical part of the company's work as they will have to "encode" the message for the consumers, who will decode it afterwards. Encoding, as explained by Geoff Fripp, can pass through the "transformation of an abstract idea into a communicable message" (2018). It can be done by any perceptive word, symbol, images (etc.) that can be decoded by the customers' brains. The "decoding" part is the future customer interpreting the message, transmitted by the company, and identifying the most important parts of it. For example, Red Bull has used animated drawings to promote their product for several years, and now that allows its customers to identify which brand is presented in the advertising within the first few seconds. It can also be recognized by the way words are turned: always funny and creative, they play a lot on the message that the energy drink can "make you fly".

Conducted correctly, the analysis of the macro-model of the communications process adapted to a specific message could bring external and internal benefits to the company and its employees. Getting this feedback after conducting a specific analysis would allow the company to change the message in the next advertisement for example, and to make it more efficient. The audience would react positively if it has been improved by buying the advertised product for example, and the company image would be developed as well in the market segment chosen.

2.3 Instagram: a major marketing tool

The "Z" generation evolved around technological progress: from the development of the Internet as it is now, to the creation of the mobile phones during the 1990's and to

smartphones in the 2000's. This evolution was accompanied by the development of what we call mobile applications. Nowadays, having a phone is not only about calling or texting another person, or even to play snake, but it is also about watching a movie on Netflix or a video on YouTube, reading the news online and following feeds of Instagram. But it raises questions about applications. According to the website TechoPedia, it is a software that is commonly used on mobile devices (phone, tablet, etc.) and provide limited and isolated functionality (2019).

Now, let's focus on Instagram. Most people know that Instagram is an 'app', and one of the most famous ones. Its two creators, Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, both graduated from the Stanford University where they met, wanted to be able to share their daily life pictures to the world. Therefore, K. Systrom decided to create Burnb, a code that would allow him to do that: publish pictures, and only that function. This is when M. Krieger joined his fellow comrade to intervene and add a personal touch, as Burnb was only allowing its users to publish pictures, but nothing else. Instagram first came out in October 2010, and users were finally able to add filters to the published pictures. It immediately was a success as it hit one million users in three months only (Instazood.com, 2018). It rapidly became an international success and from the beginning of 2011, investors were becoming interested. By March 2011, Systrom and Krieger had raised 7 million Dollars of investments. One year later, Instagram reached 27 million users and the application appeared on Android Play in April 2012. By the end of the year 2012, the two creators had received another round of funding that was accounted for \$500 million (Instazood.com, 2018). New filters were added and shortly after Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, acquired the company for \$1 billion in stock and cash, the app was translated into more than 25 languages and the tags had made their apparitions too (Instazood.com, 2018). As shown in the graphic published by Instazood, the number of users of Instagram kept growing over the years and it passed the bar of one billion users in June 2018.

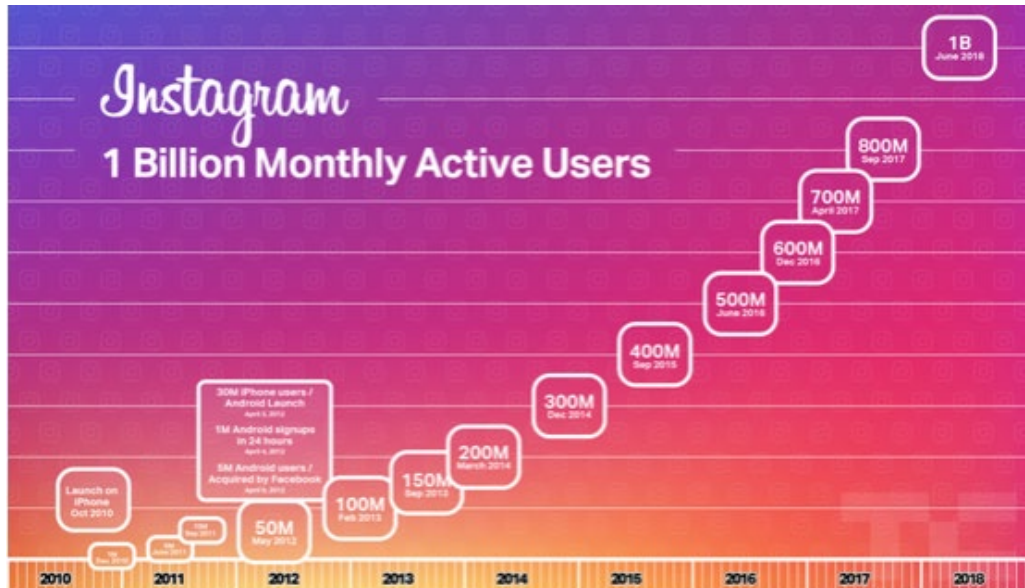


Figure 3: Evolution of the number of monthly active users on Instagram (Instazood, 2018)

As shown by the Figure 11, Instagram occupies the 6th place in the ranking made by Statista, according to the number of active users in January 2019. As demonstrated below, Instagram is still behind Facebook who was the first social media platform to reach a billion users, or even YouTube that can be considered a competitor as Instagram allows it users to share small videos. However, it is ahead of Twitter or even Snapchat, who respectively only counted 326 million and 287 million users in January (Statista, 2019). The benefits of being before social medias platforms such as Twitter or Snapchat are numerous: it attracts more companies on the application to conduct marketing and therefore brings an additional revenue. Moreover, it allows the application to be recognize as a real marketing tool in the social media era, which participated to its expansion on the international side.

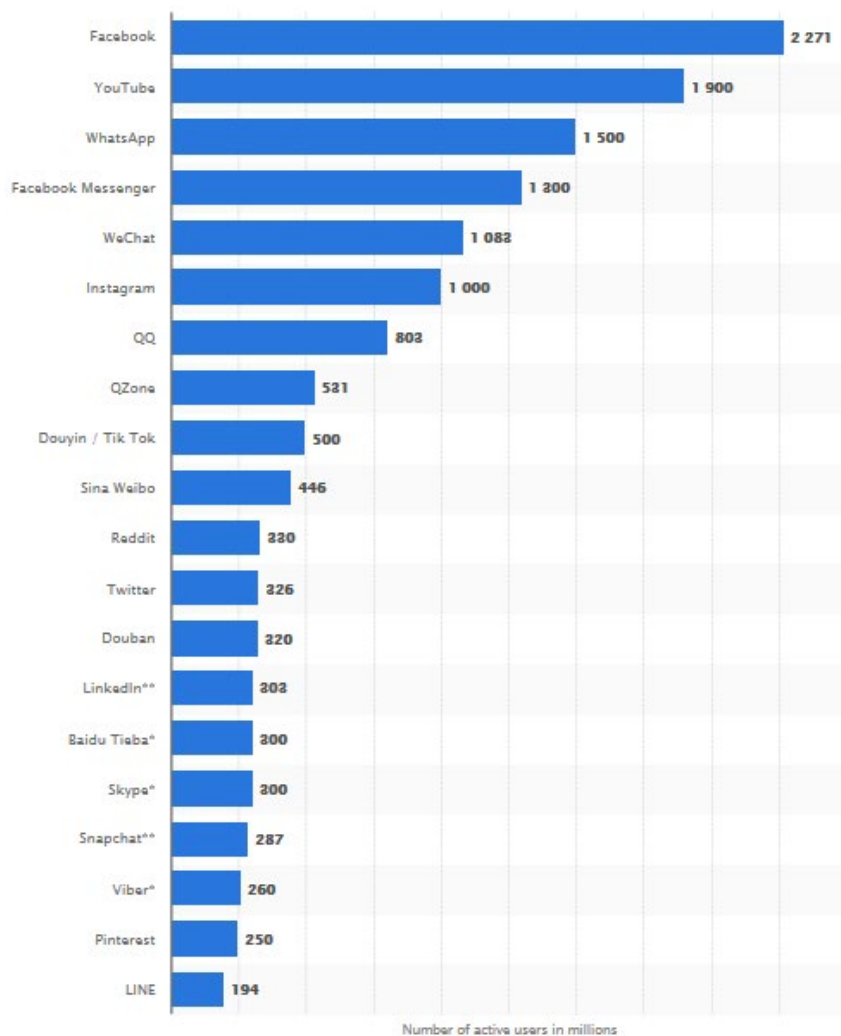


Figure 4: Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2019, ranked by number of active users (Statista, 2019)

As mentioned earlier, Instagram has known an important growth in the last decade and it now accounts for one of the biggest social media platforms on the planet. It also became a marketing tool to many companies: a fact that the company tried to develop to its advantages. The discovery that Instagram had developed special business accounts for companies to be recognized on the network was a must: creating a business account on Instagram is free, and the application even proposes a free formation to use it in the most efficient manner. However, doing publicity is paying even though the process of it is simplified. Having a business account is a necessity to create advertisements on Instagram and to have access to the Instagram Shopping. In February, there were around 8 million business accounts on Instagram that enjoyed the analytic data and the right to create ads every now and then according to Maddy Osman

for Sprout Social (2018). The businesses are also using Instagram via, what we now call “Instagramers”: public persons doing promotion for a brand according to the contract they have. For example, the Miss France and Miss Universe of 2016 posted on her account in December 2018 a picture featured by Hairburst, a hair specialist brand to promote their new product range.



Picture 1: Instagram post from Iris Mittenaere (Instagram, 2018)

It was a success as the picture got more than 125k “likes” and 500 comments. The phenomenon of influencing via Instagram appeared a few years ago, and it is considered as a full job description to be an Instagramer now. The same principle can be adapted to YouTube (Youtuber), but the Instagram phenomenon is, until now, the biggest one as people often prefers the simple design of Instagram and the fact that scrolling through the pictures is easier and faster than watching a video or reading a text. Moreover, by creating partnerships with celebrities and famous people, they are sure to reach a larger audience.

It is important to mention that all the additions that can go with posts on Instagram: hashtags (#), emojis, stories or even locations. Emojis are part of the communication nowadays: a recent research conducted by Instagram revealed that emojis were used a lot as there were a synonym of the publisher’s emotions: in 2018, 50% of all posts were accompanied by emojis. The writer was surprised to learn that Finland was the country posting emojis the most with 63% of all texts posted that contained an emoji. It is followed by France with 50%, then the United Kingdom with 48% and Germany with 47% (M.

Osman, 2018). But then what about hashtags? It is well-known that hashtags are used a lot as they affect the views a post will have. Hashtags are an essential part of a marketing campaigns as having at least one hashtag increases the engagement of the viewers by 12.6% (M. Osman, 2018). Moreover, hashtags are now so popular on Instagram that they diffused themselves on others social medias such as Twitter and even Facebook. The first example that came to my mind and that shook the World in 2018, was the #metoo movement, related to the mental or physical harms lived by women. What was first a public allegation of sexual-assault (Harvey Weinstein's affair) turned to a global phenomenon where women were sharing traumatic past experiences caused by sexism. It shows the influence of hashtags on the world and can allow the brand to touch a large audience if it is well managed. Emojis and hashtags impact the views of the published posts on Instagram, and it will also allow the thesis to observe how Turku and Troyes are using them to reach their objectives.

In August 2016, Instagram integrates the "stories" to its application, that first made an apparition on Snapchat (Instagram, 2019). It was a true success and started to be used first by all the famous personalities and business brand to promote their product more efficiently. Several effects were added to it, such as the "boomerang", the rapid or slow effects, or the famous filters. It allows the users to publish temporary pictures that can now be seen by all the followers or only by the 'close friends' the user chose to share it with (Instagram, 2019). In 2017, live stories were available globally: it is very popular in the business accounts as it allows them to share events such as opening or premieres in Live to the world. The most recent example the author has, is the Victoria Secret Fashion Show: famous for working with the most sought-after model worldwide, the brand is using their popularity to increase the brand awareness of their collections and the company itself. As the show is well-known for its colorful and musical defile, the models were often doing live videos to show how the backstage preparation was being done for example. During those lives and on the numerous posts published during that event in November, we could see that the localization was often mentioned as this year, the show was being held in New York. Adding the localization to each post gives an advantage to the city or region mentioned as it allows the viewers to see where the picture was taken, and it has an even bigger impact if the picture published is popular on Instagram. Some landscapes are so appreciated by the public, that it creates a "wow" effect in the mind of the viewer. It could be described as a dreaming stage: it is what comes before the planning stage while organizing a trip according to Telle Tuominen and Susanna Saari, both professors at the Turku University of Applied Sciences. These

elements are important to Troyes and Turku: both cities are not famous among tourists, and they could benefit from the fact that every person seeing the post can localize the position and see where is situated the city, and sometimes even in which country.

As displayed by the picture above from Sprout Social, 59% of the Instagram's users are between 18 and 29 years old. It means that by doing marketing in Instagram, brands must be aware of the young generation as their audience, but also of the fact that 38% of their main public is feminine. That knowledge would allow them to adapt their publications.

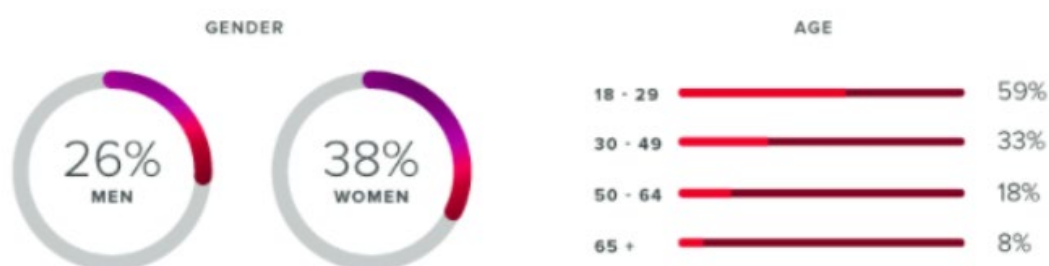


Figure 5: Average of the general audience on Instagram (Sprout Social, 2018)

Instagram benefits from many advantages to be used as a marketing tool. First, we could mention the financial revenues: in 2017, the worldwide mobile internet advertising revenue of Instagram amounted for 3.64 billion Dollar, against \$1.86 billion in 2016. In one year, its revenue from advertising almost doubled and it was expected to be around \$7 billion in 2018 (Statista, 2017). The growth is expected due to the addition of Instagram Stories, but also of Instagram Shopping (creation of a direct link to buy the product showed on the picture posted).

All these developments, not only on the application, but on the internet network itself, now allows the companies to view Instagram as a true marketing tool. According to the product and the segment, that the brand wants to attract, Instagram can be a real help to promote the product range and increase its sells.

3. METHODOLOGY

As discovered earlier, Instagram is one of the most used social media worldwide and analyzing how Troyes and Turku are using it to their advantage to promote their region for the tourism industry would be interesting. A quantitative research will be conducted for each account selected and the numbers found will allow us to observe and compare how the social media platform selected (here Instagram) is used by the different tourism offices.

3.1 Interviews

In France, the opportunity to interview of Albéric Marville, who is in charge of all the tourism missions and events happening in the city of Troyes, present itself after talking to Amandine Moniot, head of the marketing department for the city. While some of the questions of the interview could not be answered from lack of information or none disclosure agreements from the city (see 'Questions of the Interview' in the Appendix), the current and future marketing strategies, goals of the city, their resources, their tools, and the results obtained in the previous years were still learned. Unfortunately, some limitations were met with the tourism office in Turku. After a successful exchange with the head of the marketing department, the names of all the platforms used to promote their tourism marketing strategy were received. Several attempts of communication were done by the author to try to set up an interview to obtain the same data that was provided by the tourism office of Troyes. However, after sending several emails to her last contact, going to the tourism office in person, and giving them both a paper and an online version of the questions that would be conducted, no answers were received and that became a limit to the thesis. Even though the data provided by Albéric Marville is being used in this thesis, the equivalent for the tourism office of Turku could not be found and all the observations proposed about the strategies in Turku are only going to be hypothesized from the author.

3.2 Observations

As one of the main goals is to compare how Instagram is being used by the cities of Troyes and Turku to promote tourism, we will only focus here on three Instagram accounts: Visit Turku, Visit Archipelago and Troyes Champagne Tourisme. These three accounts are dedicated to raise awareness of people from other countries and invite them to visit the countries selected: France and Finland. To do this analysis, two tools

will be used to analyze the activities of specific accounts on Instagram: Social Blade, famous among Youtuber and Instagramer, and Ninjalitics, a new website that specifically focus its analysis on Instagram accounts only. To be sure of the reliability of those, the author checked her personal account to see if the numbers were correct and coherent on both websites and it did. Of course, from one to another, some numbers might differ, but it will allow us to have an approximation and analyze the results more efficiently as we will have two references and not only one. To have a more accurate she decided to select the last 12 posts of each account on the 14th of March and analyze the variation. It will allow me to compare the results in the end and show of the promotion is made on each Instagram account selected. The engagement rate, calculated by the number of likes and comments on one post and divided by the number of followers, will give us an estimation of the engagement of the viewers towards the account mentioned. The posts selected were chosen in low season to see if the accounts were managed all year, even when tourists are not particularly present. It will allow us to see clearly the efforts made by the tourism offices to conserve their followers and their interests. Moreover, the third step of the empirical part will allow us to show the relation between the number of followers and the number of posts published over the period chosen.

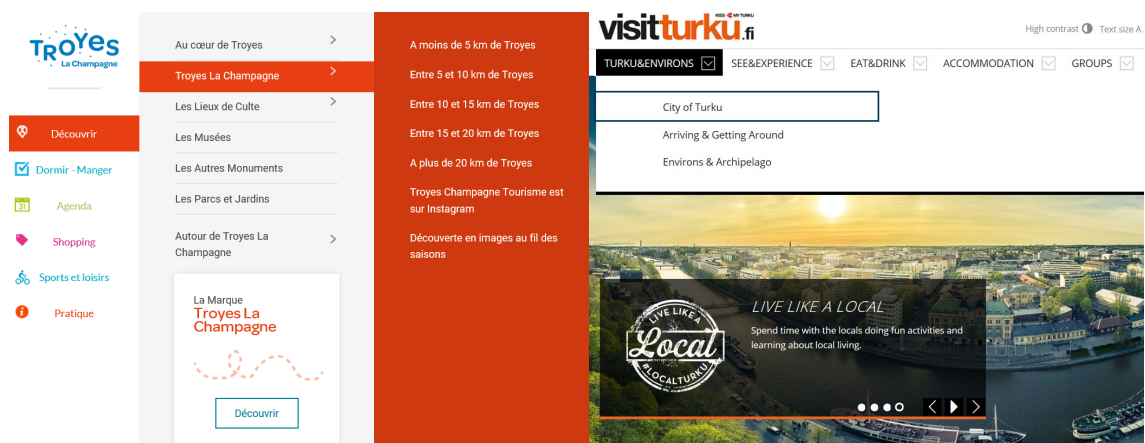
3.2 Limitations

It is important to mention some limitations that are present in this thesis. The first one would be the lack of informations transmitted by the tourism office of Turku. Without that data, it is impossible to compare the strategies of both offices and that explains why the focus will be to compare how is managed Instagram by Troyes and Turku. The second limit would be the number of posts studied: twelve posts are not enough to talk about the strategies. Therefore, the conclusions we will make about the strategies, if they were not verified by the tourism offices, will be hypothesises, which limits the reliability of the data given.

4. CASE STUDY: INSTAGRAM

4.1 Troyes and Turku: their marketing tools

As explained in the introduction, Troyes and Turku are trying to focus on developing the cities on the national side and include the region in the development. It is demonstrated by their tourism website: VisitTurku.com and tourisme-troyes.com. Both websites propose direct links regarding activities inside the cities (museums, practical places, restaurants), but also outside of the city, and in the region:



Picture 2: Official Website of Troyes Champagne Tourism (2019).

Picture 3: Official website of Visit Turku (2019).

According to Albéric Marville, the main goal of the city of Troyes is to extend the recognition of Troyes by passing through its patrimony and its culture on the national level. They have different tools and events to achieve this. It includes the “Marathon du Patrimoine”, organized each year and dedicated to the discovery of the city via a healthy routine such as running and walking around the agglomeration. Moreover, the festival “Les Nuits de Champagne” participates to the attraction of outside people from the region. Even if these events are directed towards a national public, the tourism office of Troyes is still part of Atout France GIE, an organism promoting the territory on an international side and participating to events organized by them (Marville A., 2019).

Thanks to the interview conducted with Mr. Marville, it was possible to learn that they are promoting the Champagne territory via TV (thanks to the regional channel: Canal 32), newspapers and medias. They are trying to develop this last one on the numeric side and it can be noticed by their websites, where every page has in the end direct links to

several communication channels. It includes direct and database marketing, online and social media marketing, but also mobile marketing as demonstrated by the icons below:



Picture 4: Communication tools used by Troyes Champagne Tourism (tourisme-troyes.com, 2019).

Phone number and email are included, but the most important interesting ones for this thesis here are Facebook, Instagram, Google and Pinterest which are well-known all over the world. Therefore, the online and social media marketing is already a big part of the global marketing plan and is planned to be extended.

As understood in the methodology, the author had less contact with the tourism office of Turku, but they communicated the networks they used to promote their city and the region (mostly with the archipelago included). For the tourism promotion, their main marketing tool are their websites: the principal one, Visit Turku that allows tourists to find all the practical informations about the city; Kiss my Turku is promoting all the interesting activities that can be done in Turku and the archipelago, and Eat My Turku is dedicated to providing good addresses to eat specialties or gastronomic food in Turku. While Visit Turku and Eat My Turku are proposing the website in different languages (Finnish, English, Swedish and Russian), it is not the case of Kiss My Turku. In the author's opinion and according to the research findings, this last one is dedicated to Finnish people living in Turku and meaning to invite them to discover their region and the archipelago even more.

There is another website that differs from the others and it is "Live Like A Local". Visit Turku is in partnership with Doerz, a Finnish company specialized in the discovery of the local culture. It allows the tourists to plan their trip directly in Turku and choose the activities they wish to do. They wish to "build the bridge between the locals and travelers" (Doerz, 2019). Doerz's website aims at inviting people explore the activities proposed in the city chosen (in that special case Turku) such as meeting Santa Claus in winter season or experiencing outdoors activities by cold-swimming and sauna. This

partnership brings benefits to both the city of Turku and Doerz as it allows to expand the Finnish culture abroad and invites the tourists to experience it via local eyes.

Now that the online websites were discussed about, social media platforms need to be mentioned. Such as Troyes, they are using the most famous ones such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. The main difference that the author noticed is that Turku is sharing their culture via other social media, mostly restricted to some countries. Weibo for example, is the first social media used in China. It is very similar to Twitter and private but controlled by the state. According to Olivier Verot, it is one of the sources of information of the inhabitants of China and it is easily getting censored even though its users are always trying to find new codes and expressions to avoid it and keep communicating normally without their words being deleted. Another network used by the tourism office is VKontakte, a Russian application that is the most influential one in the country with 95 million of users in 2016 (Moscow Times, 2017). Since 2014, it is controlled by two persons close to Poutine as the creator of VKontakte, Pavel Durov refused to cooperate and give away informations to the FSB according to the rumors on the international field. The fact that the tourism office of Turku uses these two applications is an advantage as it raises awareness in countries such as Russia and China, where informations can be restricted or reserved to the “privileged class”. The limit to that social media marketing for China is the language: Russian can be selected, but the Chinese language is not present once on their different websites. Finland can therefore benefit from the close proximity to Russia to attract future visitors and make its presence known to at least a small percentage of Chinese, which is still considerable as the country counted 1.386 billion of people in 2017 (The World Bank, 2019).

According to the data collected, we can remark that Turku is basing its promotion mostly on the online and social media promotion while Troyes is also taking part in several events organized by the National Tourism Union.

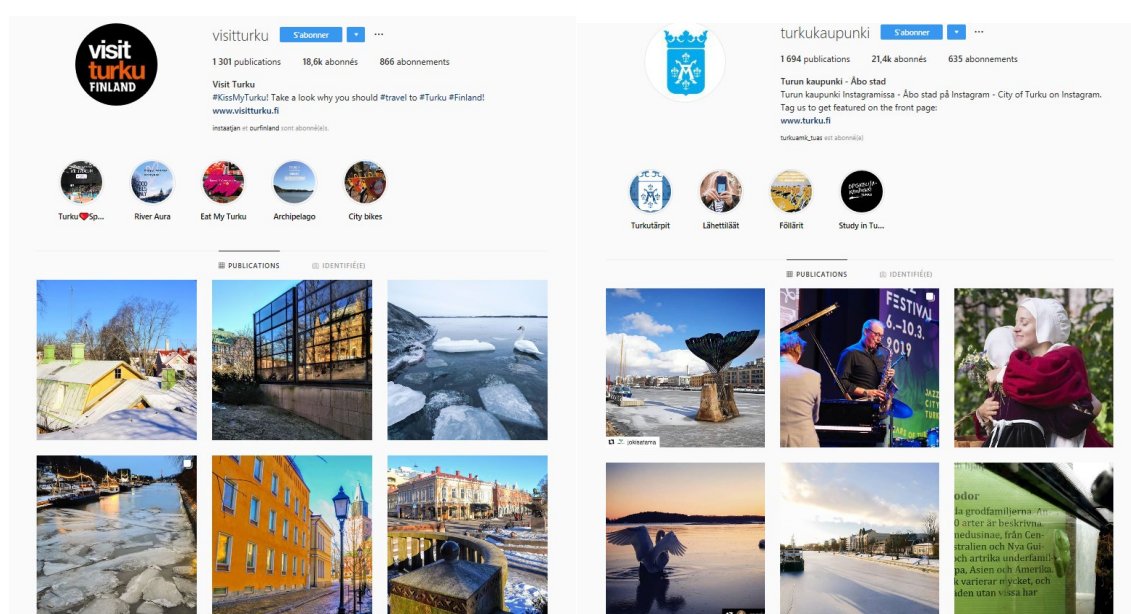
4.2 Instagram as a marketing tool in Troyes and Turku

Instagram is one of the most important social media platforms worldwide with more than 1 billion users. We also saw that it could be used as a tool for brands searching to raise their awareness and their profits. In addition, the tourism industry truly benefited from the soaring of Instagram as nowadays, people are trying to post the perfect picture, the most “Instagrammable” one. That means that by playing on Instagram and searching to invite people through picture can have a real influence on the tourism numbers.

Raising awareness is something that is common between business brands and the tourism offices of Troyes and Turku, and that is an objective they are trying to develop over the years continuously.

4.2.1 Specific Instagram Accounts

If we search on google “Turku Instagram”, the first result that appears is the localization: Turku, Finland. It is followed by the hashtag #turku and then by two accounts: @turkukaupunki, which is the official Instagram page of the City of Turku, and @visitturku, the account of the tourism office in Turku.



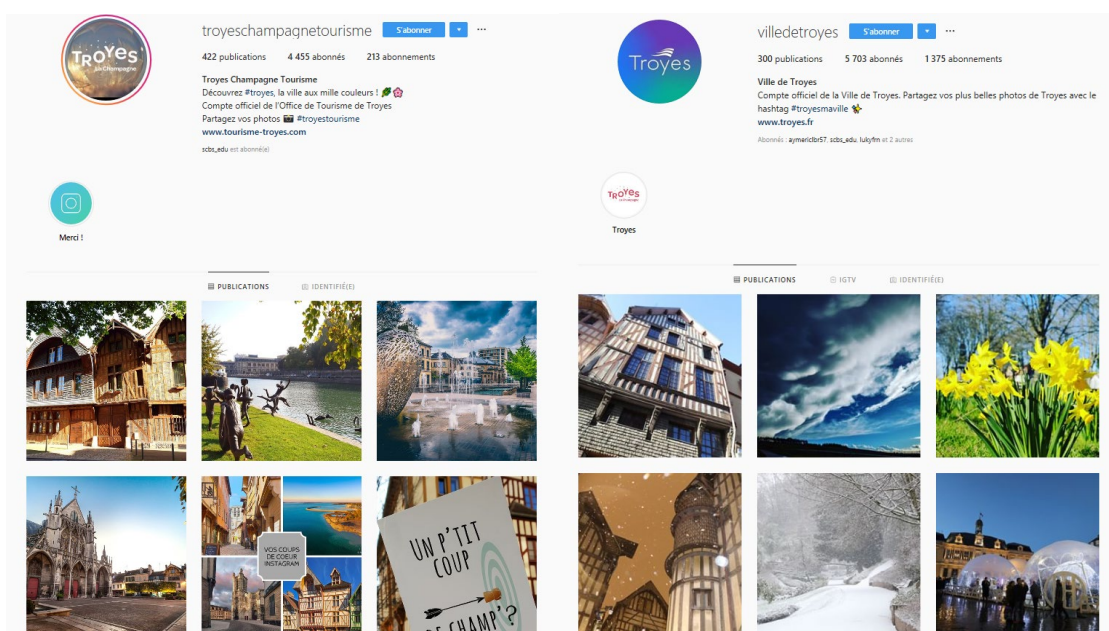
Picture 5: Instagram account of Visit Turku (Instagram, 2019)

Picture 6: Instagram account of the city of Turku (Instagram, 2019)

What are the differences between these two accounts? First the language: while one is in Finnish as its content is destined to the inhabitants of the city, the other is in English as its public is expected to be tourists or people abroad. Then, while the mission of Visit Turku and the tourism office is to promote the region to exterior eyes, the City of Turku is more fixed on describing daily activities and daily life in Turku. Several exchange students started to follow Visit Turku when they first arrived in Finland because its content was more interesting to them and allowed them to discover some places of the city they did not know yet. According to the author’s opinion, the account of the city of Turku is a nice way for young people, as 59% of the users of Instagram are between 18 and 29 years old, to participate to events organized by the city and be aware of the efforts done by the municipal council to make the city alive.

While the city of Turku accounts for 21.4 thousand followers (on the 12th of March 2019), the tourism office had 18.6 thousand followers (on the 12th of March 2019). Both accounts have direct links to their official websites that allow the visitor of the account to have easily access to more informations rapidly and efficiently. However, as the focus is on Turku and the archipelago, it was a surprise to discover that there were no mentions of the archipelago because the physical tourism office of Turku is doing its promotion all the time. The account of Visit Turku only has a story dedicated to it (where only where only two videos are uploaded) and only a few pictures are present on the account of the city of Turku. There is another account dedicated to the discovery of the archipelago: @visitarchipelago which had on the 13th of March 2019, 10.5 thousand followers. It also has its own website and direct link, but it is considered as an exterior part of Turku on the tourism side. The subtitle on the application describes it as “Archipelago Finland” and does the distinction with the city itself even though the (physical) tourism office of Turku does its promotion by proposing maps, bike tours or indicating all the roads available to travel around the archipelago.

The assessment that Turku had several Instagram accounts to promote on one point its city, and another one to promote the archipelago. There is indeed a similarity: as is it the case for Turku; there is an account for the city of Troyes (@villedetroyes), and another one dedicated to the tourism in Troyes and its agglomeration (@troyeschampagnetourisme).



Picture 7: Instagram account of Troyes Champagne Tourism (Instagram, 2019)

Picture 8: Instagram account of Ville de Troyes (Instagram, 2019)

However, as Albéric Marville mentioned, Troyes is trying to develop a new tourism brand called “Troyes La Champagne” and this is the name employed to promote the city on the national, european and international level. Therefore, there is no distinction between the city of Troyes and its Champagne Patrimony as it is done by Turku. They do not hesitate to share pictures of city, but also of the Lac de la Forêt d’Orient, part of the agglomeration and known for its biodiversity in the region for example. The account of the city of Troyes is similar to the one of the city of Turku, which appoints the events of the city, its advantages and its news: the most recent one was the Christmas Bubbles created in partnership of Festilight (store and event production company based in the agglomeration of the city, in Saint Parres Aux Tertres) in the central place of the city , available for everyone to visit, mostly for the children’s enjoyment. The observation that the number of followers was less important on these accounts compared to Turku accounts: Ville de Troyes accounted on the 12th of March 2019, 5703 followers and Troyes Champagne Tourisme had 4462 followers on the same date. The search path of google was not including that last account in the top 5: while the first result was “Ville de Troyes”, the second one was the hashtag #Troyes and the third one was the localization. However, the account dedicated to the Tourism in Troyes only came in the 7th position, after the ESTAC account (Instagram account of the football club of the city) and after McArthurGlen account which represents the factory outlets shops, very popular in the region thanks to the old past of the city in the textile industry in France. Remembering that the creation of the tourism brand “Troyes Champagne Tourisme” was recent, a research was conducted regarding its first publication. Even though the first picture is dated from 2014, there was no legends and very few hashtags. According to the account, there was a change in May 2018: they added a legend directed to the viewers, which was not only mentioning the architecture or the monument but also inviting people to answer and comment the published post. The story called “Merci” allowed the discovery of an important development: they only passed the bar of the 1000 followers 8 months ago, and the 4000 followers 5 weeks ago. That progression indicates that the tourism office reinforced their social media strategy and that it was a success as the number of followers was multiplied by 4 in only seven months. For the thesis, it is important to mention that that story indicates how was used and develop Instagram by the tourism office of Troyes over the last year, even though it is not at its full capacity as of now.

4.2.2 Metric Analysis

Starting with Visit Turku: the account had 18,703 followers, was following 867 accounts and posted 1302 posts since the creation of the account on the chosen date. Ninjalitics allowed me to compare the number of likes to the number of comments by creating a graphic where we can see the difference between both:



Figure 6: Analysis of the last 12 posts of Visit Turku on the 14th of March (Ninjalitics, 2019)

According to this graphic, we can determine that the last twelve posts on the 14th of March were published from the 20th of February to the 13 of March which means that the tourism office of Turku has posted a picture every 2.75 days over the period of time chosen. Moreover, the other obvious observation is the difference between the number of likes and comments. Thanks to this graphic, the writer determines that the average of likes over these last 12 posts was of 844,7 likes while the average of comments was only of 5.08 comments. These two elements allow us to have the engagement rate of the followers regarding the Instagram account as we will divide the sum of these two numbers by the total number of followers. It gives us an engagement rate of 4.54% regarding the last 12 posts on the 14th of March 2019. The engagement was given on both Social Blade and Ninjalitics but even though it was close, it was a bit different as the numbers are not always the same. On the last 12 posts, only two of these posts passed the bar of the 1000 of likes which is a good thing because it shows the differences between these posts and the others: the most popular picture, posted on the 22nd of February even reached 2044 likes (and 16 comments). That picture will be the base to study how the

tourism office of Turku is using Instagram. As observed below, it was a picture taken by another user of Instagram (@jn, from his real name Joerg Nicht who is a photographer) and it represents the Turku Castle under the snow from an air view, probably taken with a drone. This picture was a repost, which was a generated content post: it means that Joerg Nicht used hashtags and the localization when he posted the original picture which then allowed Visit Turku to be aware of it and repost it to promote the famous castle of Turku and promote as the same time their history and the well-known snowing landscapes of the town.



Picture 9: Instagram post of Visit Turku (Instagram, 2019)

It allows this thesis to determine that there is a connection with the hashtags used by Visit Turku. Over the last 12 posts, each one of them had hashtags with three that were always cited: #turku, #visitturku, and #kissmyturku. The hashtags are then adapted to the post such as #turkucastle for the picture above. Some hashtags are also more general and destined to touch a larger audience such as #finland or #instatravel, who are really popular on Instagram with respectively 11.3 million posts and 82.3 million posts on the (14th of March 2019) compared to the ones cited before: it shows that the tourism office is choosing carefully its hashtags and use most of the basic functionalities provided by Instagram. #Visitturku only had 103 thousand posts associated and #turku recently

reached the million of posts. The localization also allows the viewers to visualize where is situated Turku and the castle itself as Finland is not known abroad for its history but more for its current lifestyle.

This post can be an example of the macro-model of the communication process and how it is applied to Instagram. The full post corresponds to the message transmitted to the followers/viewers. The encoding resides on the localization, the hashtags, and the legend added by the tourism office before they posted the picture. Then the receiver/user viewing the picture will decode the post by searching for example where the castle of Turku is situated or search for other pictures of it via the hashtags. The response will be communicated to Visit Turku by a like or a comment on the post itself. “Woow” or “That’s incredible” as we can see in the post above. The office will be able to see that the picture made an impact on the viewers as the picture itself is beautiful but also because it allows to put into light the historic patrimony of the region. The reactions to the posts used always allow them to have a pertinent feedback and see what is interesting in the eyes of the viewers, thanks to the macro-model of the communications process.

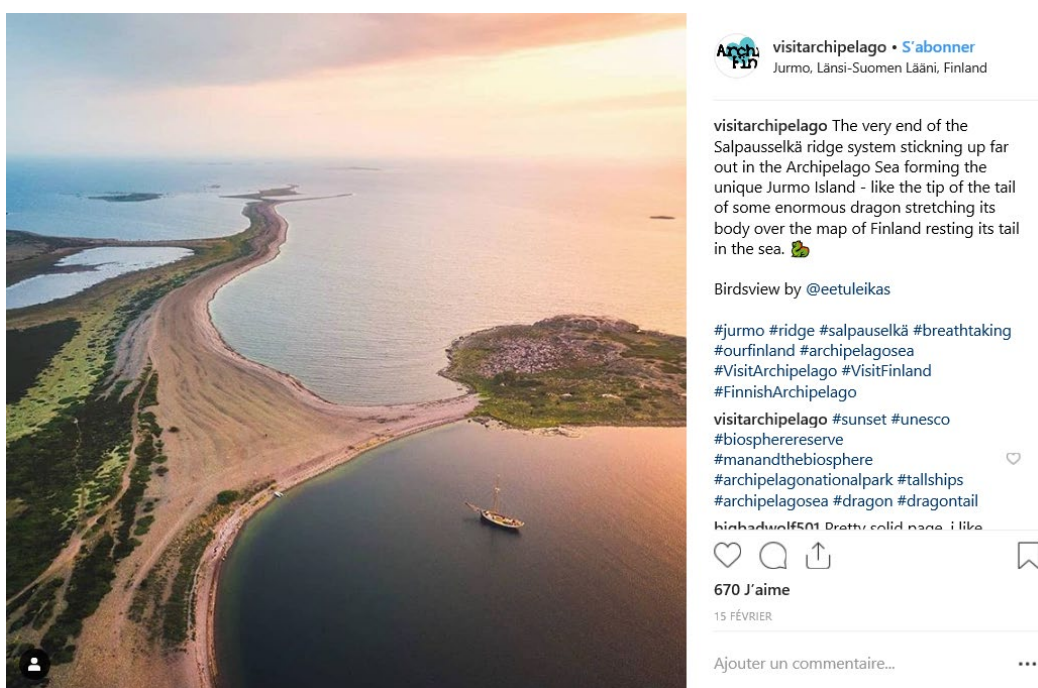
The author will continue the analysis with Visit Archipelago. With the same graphic from Ninjalitics, we can already compare some of the findings:



Figure 7: Analysis of the last 12 posts of Visit Archipelago (Ninjalitics, 2019)

Compared to Visit Turku, the posts are irregular and the time-lapse between them are

not coherent at all: three pictures were posted between the 6th and the 8th of February but none were posted during the next 5 days. The same scheme appeared mid-February between the 18th and the 25th. The last post is dated from the 11th of March after an absence of posts for ten days. It shows a lack of engagement and stability towards the account which maybe mean that more efforts are given regarding the big cities and more touristic places of Finland. The engagement rate of this account is estimated at 3,57%, with an average of 372 likes and 2,75 comments. Even though the account has more than 10500 followers, it seems the engagement rate is quite small and that might result from the lack of stability in the publishing of the posts. As done previously, She selected the best post of the twelve to see how it was managed:



Picture 10: Instagram post of Visit Archipelago (Instagram, 2019). There are some similarities between the most popular picture of Visit Turku such as the localization and the hashtags used such as #jurmo, #ourfinland or #finnisharchipelgo. These hashtags show that the distinction with Turku is again done as no mention of the city is present. Moreover, hashtags are always added too when watching the other posts,. Furthermore, as the picture above, the user generated content is again used, and it is a pattern that is repeated quite often by Visit Archipelago or even Visit Turku. The use of other photographs published by Finnish people or travelers allow them to share the nature and the biodiversity of the archipelago and their experiences in the archipelago which participates to build the brand and the recognition of the Archipelago. It allows the viewers to put themselves in the shoes of the publishers and consider the picture as original and truthful as they do not come from the official account but truly from

the visitors of the archipelago. That post published on the 15th of February collected 670 likes and 7 comments. On that post, there is an element that differs from the last analyzed one: the identification of several other accounts on the post itself. The original publisher of the picture (@eetuleikas), but also the official Instagram of Finland called @ourfinland, or the Instagram page of the UNESCO, an organization that inventories the most extraordinary international natural sites to preserve worldwide. That element is important because before doing that analysis, the author did not know that it part of the UNESCO patrimony and it encouraged the discovery of the Archipelago itself. The mention of the UNESCO was only present on that picture though. Similar feelings should be raised in each person watching the picture and decoding the elements added to it. The stories of the account are also a must. There are four and each one of them represents a season: spring, summer, autumn and winter. It is amazing to see the changes that occurred over the years. On a marketing point a view, it is an excellent way to stand out from all the other accounts from archipelagos over the world as the season changing is not something that occur in every place and it is also a good way to use Instagram as a marketing tool.

This analysis will be concluded with the main tourism account of Troyes, where the regularity of the publishing was noticed:



Figure 8: Analysis of the last 12 posts of Troyes Champagne Tourism (Ninjalitics, 2019)

Compared to Visit Turku and Visit Archipelago, the last twelve posts were published in

12 days which mean that the tourism office of Troyes publish one picture per day. Over these last twelve posts, the average of likes accounted for 434 likes and measured an average of 4.3 comments. That data gives an engagement rate that is higher than the previous ones: 9,76% over the last twelve posts. It is more than twice the engagement rate of Visit Tukru and almost three time the one from Visit Archipelago. Even though Troyes Champagne Tourism counted only 4491 followers on the 14th of March, it shows that its followers interact more with the published content of the account. Looking at the best post of the last twelve, some similarities and differences are observed.



Picture 11: Instagram post of Troyes Champagne Tourism (Instagram, 2019)

The similarities would be the use of hashtags, also very used by the tourism office of Troyes and the legend added to each picture trying to address the audience directly. Some hashtags are used for each picture such as #Troyes, #troyestourisme, and #troyeslachampagne, which insist on the marketing strategy of the city: including the city in a more regional set. Although it is not present on the most popular one, it is usual for the tourism office to mention the photographer if he/she has an Instagram account (and not only his/her name as the law requires) and other account such as the Grand Est (national and geographic region). However, some major differences were noticed too, like the language used, the lack of localization and the photograph itself. First, as the main goal of the city is to attract French people to the city, the legends are in French and

English is rarely used (not once in the last twelve posts, but also over the last few months). Also, the account is never using the localization even though it could benefit them regarding of the potential tourists as Troyes is a small city and it is sometimes difficult to situate it (for southern people of France mostly). Moreover, it is important to remark that the photo was taken by a professional photographer called Daniel Le Névé, employed by the tourism office. It is something that was not done by the other account on the last twelve posts chosen and it shows the efforts done on the social media level to raise awareness. It is another way to develop the city and agglomeration and that differs from the technique of using pictures of Instagram users of Visit Turku and Visit Archipelago.

4.3 Importance of Instagram for the tourism offices of Troyes and Turku

Each of the cities studied want to develop their social media platforms and Instagram is one of them. Turku has been developing the numerical side of their marketing strategy since a long time if that is coherent regarding the number of posts and followers. Moreover, as Visit Turku is active and constant, its number of followers is evolving in the same direction as it is shown on Social Blade in the graphic below:



Figure 9: Evolution of the total daily followers on Visit Turku (Social Blade, 2019)

In 15 days, the number of followers passed from 18540 to 18700 which represents an average of 10.6 new followers each day. That increase is not huge, but if it keeps the same constant over the months, its impact on the tourism in Turku can be considerable. The tourism office of Turku realized the importance of social media, or Instagram in that case and the benefits they could have from it which would be illustrated by more tourists in the next years and a growing recognition coming from other European countries or even from the American and Asian continents. That tendency might not be followed by Visit Archipelago as the number of followers are impacted by the lack of posts and instability of the account as shown below:

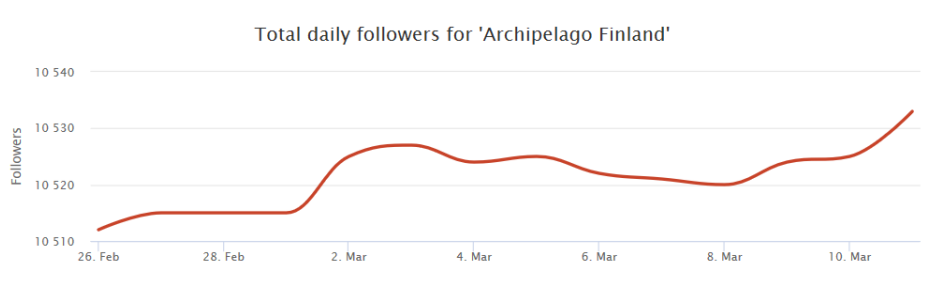


Figure 10: Evolution of the total daily followers on Visit Archipelago (Social Blade, 2019)

Therefore, even though if the Instagram account of Visit Archipelago is home to beautiful pictures and have used Instagram efficiently to promote the archipelago, the lack of stable content is penalizing the efficiency that the account could have. Moreover, because of the distinction between the archipelago and Turku, we can ask ourselves if @VisitArchipelago is a real tool of the marketing strategy of the region.

Troyes is following the same tendency that Visit Turku but their progression is more noticeable with an increase of 150 followers in 12 days according to Social Blade here again:

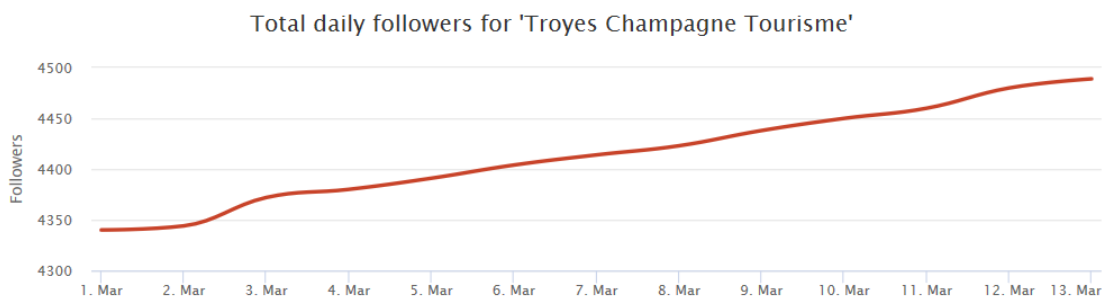


Figure 11: Evolution of the total daily followers on Troyes Champagne Tourisme (Social Blade, 2019).

As mentioned before, Albéric Marville confirmed that the social media strategy had been developed over the last year and it was accompanied by a development of all the numeric tourism promotion. According to him, creating a new brand name for the tourism promotion also allowed them to renew their strategy. This is a goal they will try to develop even more over the next years as social media platforms keep growing and is used by many young people, which are one of the main targets of travel agencies and tourism office.

Even though many efforts have been done on both sides, Troyes and Turku, there is still a lot of opportunities to be exploited regarding the use of Instagram in marketing

strategies. For Turku, there should be a clear cut between the city and the archipelago as even though there are two accounts online, the distinction is not done in real life by the physical tourism office of Turku as many brochures and information are provided to tourists that go directly there before their exploration. Moreover, the audience on Instagram seems to be more international than Troyes because of the English language and the higher number of exchange students. For Troyes, the content is diversified and include the agglomeration, the communication on Instagram should continue as it is done nowadays so that the new name taken by the tourism office (“Troyes La Champagne”) will be recognized in the future. As it is one of the main objectives in the city, it will help the tourism to grow over the next few years.

5. CONCLUSION

All along the report, the impact of social media platforms on the tourism industry was shown. A first part was developed about all the communication promotion tools that exist and that can be used to promote a brand, an experience or a product to a chosen segment. Furthermore, by developing the macro-model of the communications process we showed how the message shared by the communication tools was impacted the audience and how it could be analyzed by the company sharing the message. Then, Instagram was chosen to be studied and analyzed as it is used by the tourism offices that were interesting the author: Troyes and Turku.

Thanks to the information gathered beforehand, an analysis of the tools used by the cities could be made. Troyes is using usual advertising tools such as brochures, websites and social media (Google, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram) but also put a lot of efforts in creating new events and developing them each year to attract potential tourists. Turku is more focused on the numerical side of advertisements and has an advantage on that field as they also have two social media platforms that are restricted to 'controlled' states such as Weibo in China and Vkontakte in Russia. Kiss my Turku and Eat my Turku are two additional websites to the main tourism office website that show the efforts made in that direction.

Instagram is being used and developed continuously by the tourism offices. One of the main points in this thesis was to identify that the accounts that would participate to the expansion of the city on the national and international scene. Visit Turku, Visit Archipelago and Troyes Champagne Tourisme were discovered, then analyzed. They all have their similarities and differences. As observed and determined by the language used in the posts, Troyes wishes to capture the attention of national tourists while Turku is aiming at a European or International audience. Many efforts were done by the tourism offices to develop their Instagram accounts. Troyes has been able to develop their account in less than a year to make it better, more personal and increase the quality of the posts published to address a younger market. Turku (Visit Turku) is following the same tendency since several years but continues to put many efforts in the digital marketing, and that includes its Instagram account. However, we could ask ourselves some questions about Visit Archipelago: there is no stability and even though the quality of the post is very good, it is not enough to guarantee a stable audience to the account.

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APPENDIX

Questions of the Interview:

1. What is your name, and your position?
2. What can you tell me about tourism in Turku and its evolution?
3. In 2018, how many tourists did the city of Turku receive? Do these figures concern the agglomeration as well?
4. In 2018, what was the tourist capacity of the city of Turku (capacity of accommodation in hotels, guesthouses, lodgings, camping, or Airbnb)?
5. What is the typical profile of the tourist in Turku?
6. On which period are the tourists most present?
7. In 2018, how many events have been organized to attract tourists? Which ones?
8. How many people attended these events? And how many tourists do you count among this number?
9. What is your tourism marketing strategy (short term, long term)?
10. What are your resources and investments in tourism?
11. What tools are used to promote tourism within the city of Turku?
12. What is currently the most effective tool at the national level? And on the European / International level?
13. What aspects do you highlight when promoting your city / region? Where do you disseminate information? Is it the same depending on the supports?
14. Do you consider that the promotion made by the tourist organization of the city of Turku contributes to increase the number of tourists each year? (A percentage ?)
15. What were the goals for 2018? Have they been reached?
16. What are the objectives for the year 2019?
17. What is the share of tourism revenue on annual income in the city of Turku?
18. Are you developing new promotional materials for the year 2019? If that is the case, which ones?