Morgana Boschetti, Jana Černohlávková, Roberto Ieranò, Simona Leo, Sara A. Molteni, Anna Ramponi, Elena Solodkina, Fabrizia Toccoli, Ceyda Yapucu Tavsankoru

# SMALL HOTELS ON FACEBOOK: HOW TO COMPETE?

a workshop devised by professor Roberto Peretta



Area didattica di Lingue e Letterature straniere Planning and Management of Tourism Systems Centro Studi per il Turismo e l'Interpretazione del Territorio (CeSTIT)



#### **OBJECTIVES**

- Designing and managing the <u>web presence and</u> reputation of a small hotel, particularly on Facebook
- Suggestions to help small hotels to improve the Facebook page in order to increase their reputation on the web





- Local association gathering 33 family-run, non-hotel accommodation structures in the city of Bergamo and its province
- Founded in 2013 and consolidated
- Main aim = develop a NETWORK of solidarity and exchange among the owners of B&Bs and holiday houses on the territory, helping them to establish and manage their activity





- Special attention is paid to the valorisation of family-run hospitality in close relationship with the territory and the local culture (promotion of local products and tourist attractions)
- Enhancement of the host-guest personal relationship
- Links and partnerships with local public and private institutions
- Future plans = gather all non-hotel accommodation structures in Bergamo and its territory





#### **Advantages** for the member structures:

- Enhanced visibility:
  - on the local territory
  - on the web through the Association's website (<a href="http://www.bbbergamo.info">http://www.bbbergamo.info</a>) and social media (Facebook, YouTube, etc.)





#### **Advantages** for the member structures:

- Frequent meetings aiming to:
  - share experiences, suggestions and best practices among the members
  - acquire basic knowledge concerning the use of technological tools for both marketing activities and services provided to the guests
  - offering consultation services for potential associates





#### **Advantages** for the member structures:

- Communication about meetings and seminars on the issue of "Tourism and Territory"
- Agreements with local entities for convenient prices
- Enhanced bargaining power with local public and private institutions (obtain funds, etc.)









#### #35EURO

- The condition that allows restaurants to join the network is to provide a full meal for 35 Euros
- Restaurants can also keep their standard menu, so that clients can choose two courses and a dessert
- The availability of the 35 Euros offer is limited as the special offers in a hotel for a limited number of rooms
- Reservations by phone

www.trentacinqueuro.it



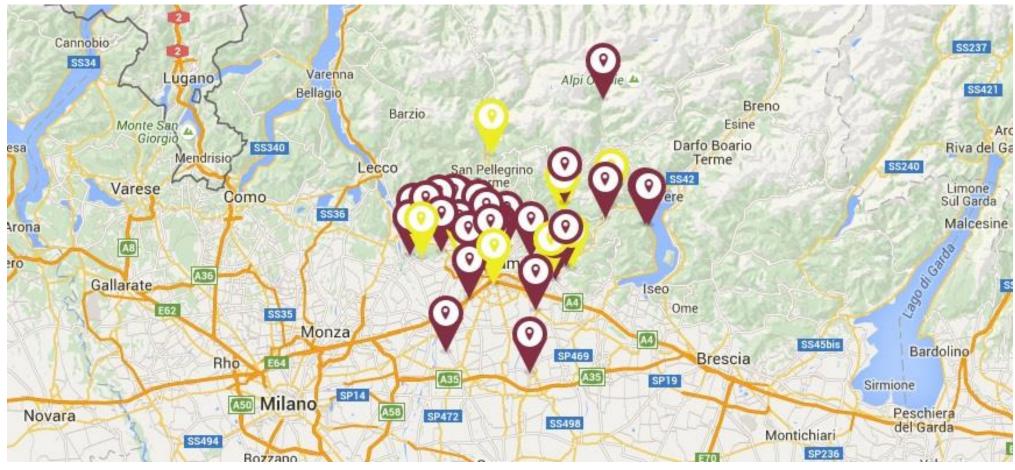
## THE ADVANTAGES of 35Euro for Bergamo B&B and co.

- Additional value for the guests who are welcomed in a friendly environment
- Advantage for the hosts who can count on places to suggest to their guests, being sure that those places offer a high quality of products and services
- In this way, the relationship between hosts and guests gets stronger











## «L'OSPITALITÀ IN APPARTAMENTO A BERGAMO»

ELISA BONACINA, CeSTIT, 2016

Elisa Bonacina, recent graduate from the University of Bergamo, took into consideration 548 listings on the platforms of WIMDU, AIRBNB e HOMEHOLIDAYS, which refers to accommodation other than hotels.

http://www.larassegna.it/2016/03/08/ospitalita-in-appartamento-mappatura-delluniversita-in-citta-548-strutture/





#### **RESULTS**

- 33% of the accommodation offer isn't included in the official data
  - 62 apartments and 31 rooms
  - 87 structures are not comparable to the current legal definitions (15,8%)
- The offer of private rooms (65%) prevails against the apartments (35%) in the city centre



### ISSUES FOR NON-HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

Two main digital disruptions caused changes for non-hotel accommodation:

- Online Travel Agents (OTAs): Online platforms offering comprehensive travel shopping and Reservations Solutions to consumers. Examples include Booking.com, Expedia, Orbitz, Travelocity, Priceline, and many local and regional sites.
- 2. Airbnb: is a website for people to list, find, and rent lodging. It has over 1,500,000 listings in 34,000 cities and 190 countries



### ARE SOCIAL NETWORKS IMPORTANT?

Nowadays it is not enough to have a website, there are other necessities that a small hotel has to take into consideration in order to be efficient from the communication point of view.

Universities call web reputation the quality of the web presence: website, directly managed social network pages, more social networks.

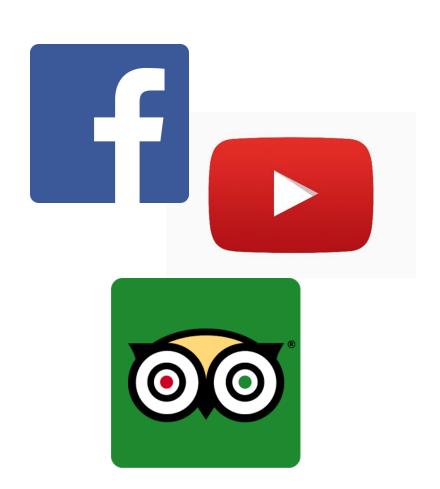


#### SITO WEB

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

- Facebook
- Youtube
- Tripadvisor

#### WEB PRESENCE





#### WEB PRESENCE

#### PORTALS

- AirB&B
- Booking.com
- Expedia
- Homeaway/Homelidays
- Wimdu
- Bad-and-breakfast.it
- Bedandbreakfastbergamo.com



Booking.com









#### WEB PRESENCE - TABLE

NOME	STRUTTURA 1	STRUTTURA 2	STRUTTURA 3	STRUTTURA N
PROFILO FB	UFFICIALE	NON UFFICIALE	PRIVATO	X
YOUTUBE	<b>√</b>			
TRIPADVISOR		<b>✓</b>		
AIRB&B		✓		<b>✓</b>
BOOKING.COM			<b>√</b>	<b>✓</b>
EXPEDIA	<b>✓</b>			
HOMEAWAY/HOMELIDAYS		<b>✓</b>	✓	
WIMDU	✓			
BED-AND-BREAKFAST.IT				
BEDANDBREAKFASTBERGAMO.COM			✓	

Total = <u>33</u> structures

Types → B&B, holiday house

Only 1 structure
out of 33 puts
Bergamo B&B &
Co.'s logo on its
website



#### WEB PRESENCE - RESULTS

#### **WEBSITE**

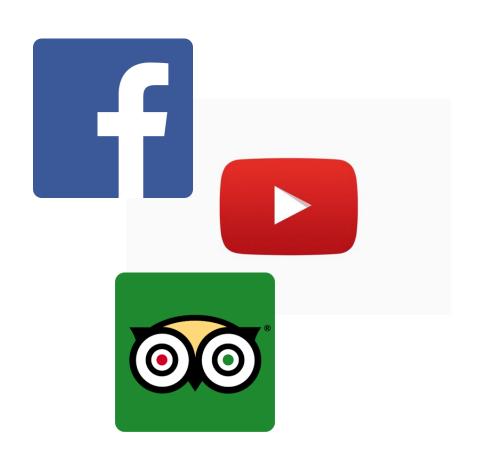
- Out of 33 structures, 29 have a website
  - Majority → mainly informative; fixed layout for every page; fixed pictures (or one different picture in each page); only the written text changes
  - Others → informative, but customized; emotional elements; eye-catching layout; the visual predominates over written text; dynamic images (slideshow); interactive; multimodality (written text, images, sounds)



#### WEB PRESENCE - RESULTS

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

- Out of 33 structures:
  - 23 are on FB
  - 22 are on Tripadvisor
  - 12 are on YouTube





#### WEB PRESENCE - RESULTS

#### **PORTALS**

Out of 33 structures:

- AirB&B → 9
- Booking.com → 12
- Expedia → 4
- Homeaway/Homelidays → 5
- Wimdu → 7
- Bed-and-breakfast.it → 4
- Bedandbreakfastbergamo.com → 4





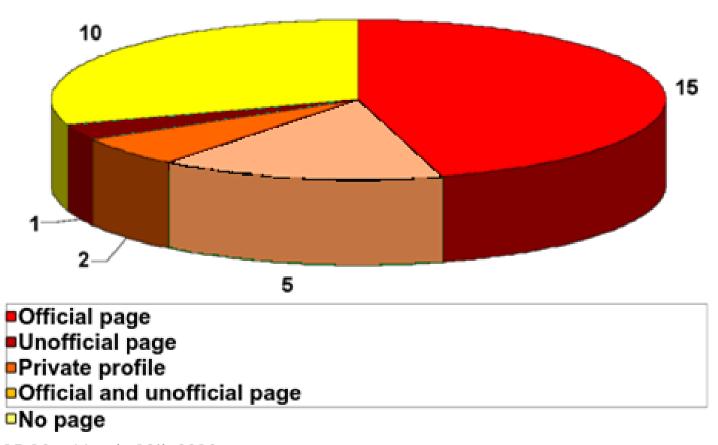








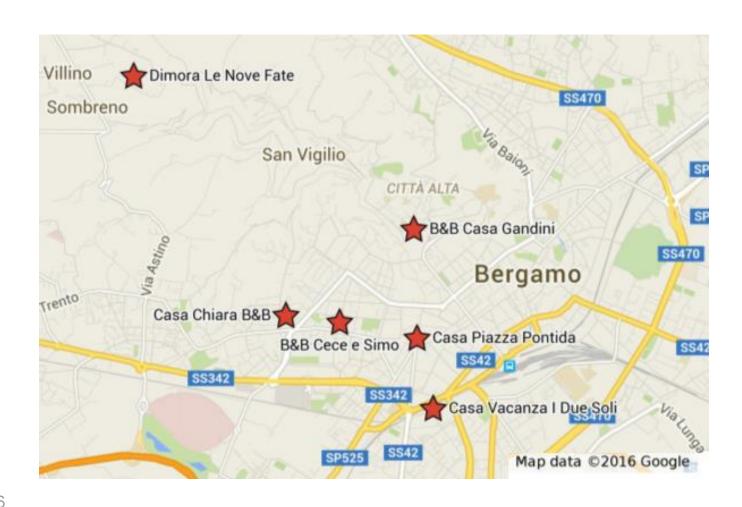
### B&B BERGAMO & CO. FACEBOOK PRESENCE





#### THE STRUCTURES WE ANALYSED

- B&B Casa Gandini
- B&B Da Cece e Simo
- Casa Chiara B&B
- Dimora Le Nove Fate
- Casa Piazza Pontida
- Casa Vacanza i due soli





#### **B&B CASA GANDINI**

Via S.Giacomo, 36 Bergamo www.casagandini.it

- The structure opened in 2006, when the owners retired from their previous jobs
- The apartment includes two bedrooms with bathroom, a livingroom and a kitchen
- It is a personal business





#### THE ROOM AND THE VIEW

**B&B CASA GANDINI** 





PMTS-PGST Workshop - year 2015-16 - March, 18th 2016



#### B&B CECE E SIMO

Via IV Novembre, 65 Bergamo

www.cecesimo.com

- Created as a restaurant in 2003. 3 years later, the B&B (one of the first ones in Bergamo) is open, starting form 3 rooms
- Affittacamere (9 rooms) + B&B (3 rooms)
- Located close to "Papa Giovanni XXIII" city hospital and to the Guardia di Finanza Academy
- Lovebanqueting (catering company) for events in Villa Appiani + exclusivity for catering in the castle of Clanezzo



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### ROOMS AND RESTAURANT

B&B DA CECE & SIMO



#### CASA CHIARA B&B

Via Balestra, 8 Bergamo www.casachiarabeb.it

- Open by the owner, Chiara, 10 years ago
- 2 kinds of accommodation:
  - B&B (2 rooms)
  - Apartment "Al N°1", close to the B&B; guests are usually health tourists
- Located close to "Papa Giovanni XXIII" city hospital





#### THE ROOMS

CASA CHIARA B&B





2 rooms: 1-2 + 2-4 people

Shared breakfast area: homemade breakfast with local products



#### DIMORA LE NOVE FATE

Via Rebetta Bassa, 4 Località Fontana BERGAMO www.lenovefate.com

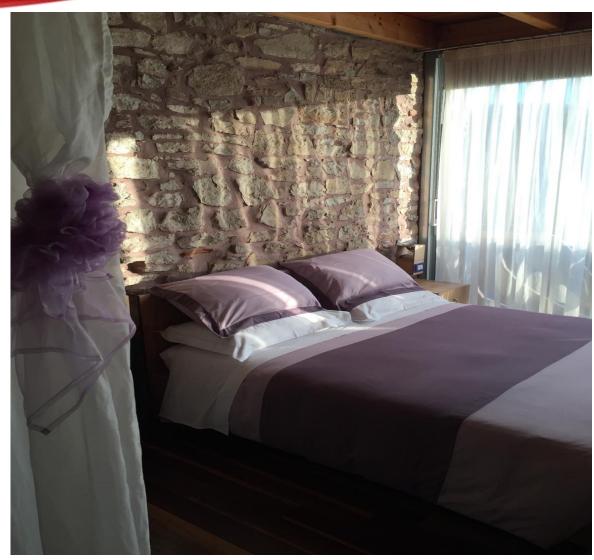
- Raffaele and Maria Luce started «Le Nove Fate» in 2008
- Affittacamere
- The structure is in Fontana, on the hills surrounding Città Alta
- Theme: la fairytale of "Le Nove Fate" (The Nine Fairies)

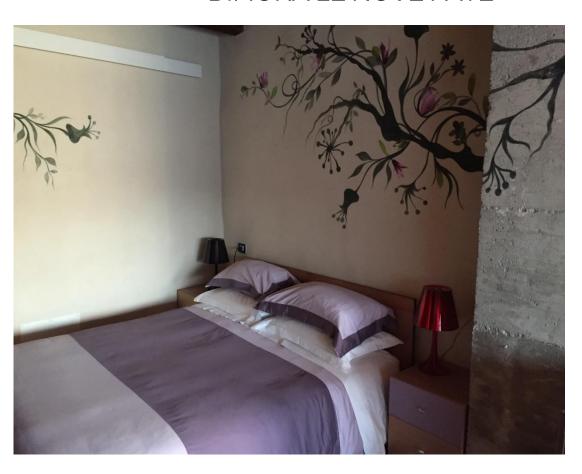




#### THE ROOMS

#### DIMORA LE NOVE FATE





6 rooms (2-4 people) 2 rooms with kitchen (3 or 5 people)



#### CASA PIAZZA PONTIDA

Piazza Pontida, 19 Bergamo

www.casapiazzapontida.it

- The structure is a holiday home
- The business started in 2012
- The apartment has one room with four beds
- It is a personal business which, for the owner, is a second job





### **L'INTERNO**

CASA PIAZZA PONTIDA





#### **CASA «I DUE SOLI»**

Via Ing. L. Magrini, 9 - 21126 BERGAMO www.iduesoli-bg.com

- 8 Flats rented as holiday houses
- These apartments are managed by one person but they have different owners
- They are registered in Airbnb with one account





### WEB PRESENCE OF THE ANALYSED STRUCTURES

NAME	B&B Casa Gandini	Dimora Le Nove Fate	Casa Piazza Pontida	Casa Vacanza I Due Soli	B&B Cece e Simo	Casa Chiara B&B
FB PROFILE	Pub unoff.	Pub off.	X	X	Pub off.	Pub off.
YOUTUBE						
TRIPADVISOR		<b>√</b>			✓	✓
AIRB&B			✓			<b>√</b>
BOOKING.COM		<b>√</b>			<b>√</b>	<b>√</b>
EXPEDIA		<b>✓</b>			<b>✓</b>	
HOMEAWAY/HOMELIDAYS			✓			
WIMDU			<b>√</b>			
BED-AND-BREAKFAST.IT					✓	
BEDANDBREAKFASTBERGAMO.COM						<b>√</b>



# «EVALUATING FACEBOOK PAGES FOR SMALL HOTELS: A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH»

LUISA MICH, RODOLFO BAGGIO, 2015

- An increasing rate of tourists generates content on Web 2.0 platforms and relies on comments and reviews
- Facebook is the most popular and used social networking website
- Social networking websites play an increasingly important role in hotel promotion and marketing
- Designing effective social networks profiles still presents a challenge



The paper in the Journal of Information Technology & Tourism (issue 3, 2015) proposes a new model to evaluate the quality of a hotel profile on a social networking site, particularly Facebook pages





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#### ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Strategic decision-making criteria and process of top management on technology adoption in the travel agency industry V.T.P. Cheng · P. Lok 189

Evaluating Facebook pages for small hotels: a systematic approach L. Mich  $\cdot$  R. Baggio 209

Typology of senior travellers as users of tourism information technology
J. Pesonen · R. Komppula · A. Riihinen 233

Integrating tourist market segmentation, targeting, and positioning using association rules

S. Pyo 253

#### BOOK REVIEW

Big data related technologies, challenges and future prospects
G. Li 283

Further articles can be found at link.springer.com

Instructions for Authors for Inf Technol Tourism are available at www.springer.com/40558





### THE EVALUATION MODEL

- Objective of the model: to help hoteliers improve their Facebook pages, achieving the highest possible levels of customer satisfaction and provide a tool to support their online positioning and compare implementations vs. competitors
- Preliminary activities: analysis of the existing models and schemes and identification of a first set of relevant characteristics for a quality hotel profile on a social networking website
- Systematic approach based on a usable model including quantitative and qualitative features



#### THE EVALUATION MODEL

- Two-step process:
  - 1. online brainstorming with influential bloggers, selected according to their expertise in tourism and hospitality, and expert web designers
  - 2. classification and consolidation of the evaluation characteristics and criteria
- Evaluation with a sample of users to test applicability, i.e. to check if the model can be implemented without any specific training and at limited cost, obtaining usable output for hotels owners and web marketers
- The model has been applied to evaluate a set of Facebook pages of Italian hotels

# WHITH WHITH WAR AND THE PARTY OF THE PARTY O

#### TABLE 1. QUANTITATIVE CHARACTERISTICS FOR A HOTEL PAGE ON FACEBOOK

The features have been classified in 3 groups:

- 1. quality and intensity of the relationships and communication
- 2. content information
- 3. graphic design and media.

Criteria to evaluate: *yes/no* depending on a previously determined threshold.

Many criteria have to be taken into account for the dichotomisation of variables, such as the type of hotel.

Also a comparison with competitor hotels could be useful to find out if a page is adequate.

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#### Interactivity-communication

Talking about this

Yes if available on the page

Were here

Yes if given on the page

Share (was Number of recommendations)

Yes if given on the page
Frequency of the last 5 official posts(posted by the hotel)

Yes if at least 5 in a month

Like Yes if, on average, at least 1 per post

Number of user comments to the last 5 official posts (excluding those posted by the hotel) Yes if, on average, at least 1 per post

Number of likes for the last 5 official posts

Yes if, on average, at least 1 per post

Number of hotel's answers to the comments made to the last 5 official posts

Yes if, on average, at least 0.5 per post

Activity per month(was friend activity)

Yes if given on the page

#### Content-information

**Events** Yes/no Yes/no Booking form Info: address Yes/no Info: phone numbers Yes/no Yes/no Info: map Info: email Yes/no Info: parking Yes/no Info: Likes and Interests Yes/no

#### Media-graphic design

Info:URL of the hotel website

Number of photos published by the hotel

Yes if at least 10 photos were posted in the timeline header

Yes/no

Date of the last official photo in hotel posts

Yes if < 1 month ago

Number of photos(not albums)published by users

Yes if, on average, at least 10

Date of the last photo published by users

Yes if < 1 month ago

Number of videos published by the hotel

Yes if, at least1

Date of the last video published by the hotel

Yes if < 6 months ago

Number of videos published by the users

Yes if at least 1

Date of the last video published by the users

Yes if < 6 months ago

Apps Yes if at least 1

Graphic design consistency with the hotel's website

Yes/no



#### TABLE 2. QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS FOR A HOTEL PAGE ON FACEBOOK

Criteria to evaluate: score according to the Likert scale (1-5)

Evaluation that must involve users: due to the subjectivity of the questions, different users will come up with different evaluations of the same Facebook page

Question		Score
>	How easy is to find the Facebook page?	1 = min; 5 = max
>	How positively do you rate the sentiment of posts?	
<b>A</b>	How do you rate the content in general (is it suitable for the hotel's target?) How representative is the cover photo?	
>	How do you rate the photos uploaded(if any)?	
>	How do you rate the videos uploaded (if any)?	
>	How do you rate the interactive applications (if any)?	
<b>A</b>	Is the graphic design consistent with their website? How likely are you to 'like' the page?	
>	How likely are you to contribute to the discussion?	
>	How likely are you to recommend the page to a friend?	



## **QUALITY EVALUATION**

• Users' and managers' satisfaction with a Facebook page

• Users: evaluation tables (Mich-Baggio, 2015)

• Managers: interviews



## **USERS' EVALUATION**

- Quantitative analysis
  - Measurable
  - 28 boolean variables: for each 'yes', 1 point is given
- Qualitative analysis
  - Likert scale (1-5)
  - Shared evaluation
- Only three of the analysed structures have a Facebook page to be evaluated



## **QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS**

Scores:

B&B 1: 15/28

B8B 2: 12/28

B&B 3: 12/28

- Excellent in the field of informative content. Events only in one, booking form only in one.
- To be improved in media-graphic sector especially, no users' contents or multimedia
- Problems in the field of interaction and communication: lack of engagement



# PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT THIS (PTAT)

- An important parameter to measure the involvement of users on a Facebook page and to understand how well a page is managed
- Simplified tool indicating the Engagement Rate of that page
- Interactions of users during the past seven days:
  - Likes, comments and shares on posts and events
  - Answers/replies to polls
  - Tag of the page
  - Was here



# **QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS TABLE**

	B <del>8</del> B 1		B8B 2	
How easy is it to find the page		B8B 3		
Sentiment of the posts	4,67		1,67	
General content		1,17		
Immagine di copertina	3,5			2,5
Uploaded pictures			2,17	
Uploaded videos	3,67		2,17	
Interactive apps		2,4		
Graphic coherence page-website	4,33		4,33	
Likeliness to give a 'like' to the page		2,6		
Likeliness to contribute to the discussion	3,17		3,33	
Likeliness to recommend the page		3,8		
shop - vear 2015-16 - March 18th 2016				



## **QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS**

- B&B 1: highest scores =
  - Better communication and contents
  - More involving
- B&B 2 and 3: lower scores
  - Problematic areas:
    - How easy is it to find the page?
    - Content and apps
    - Sentiment of the posts → users feel less likely to contribute to the discussion and recommend the page



# THE PROBLEM OF FACEBOOK SEARCH

- Double pages or page+profile
- Impossible to find the actual page directly through the search tool in Facebook
- Access through link on website or geo-referencing on the corresponding profile
- It influences the engagement rate of the page (the two pages that cannot be found have a lower PTAT value)
- Possible solution: page verification and constant uploads



## INTERVIEWS TO MANAGERS

- Visits to the structures
- Direct interviews with the owners
- Questions:
  - Pre-arranged set of questions relating to the managers' satisfaction with their online presence, particularly on Facebook
  - Specific questions for each structure, in order to better understand the individual strategies



## **OUR QUESTIONS**

- Does your structures have a Facebook page? If no, why?
- What do you expect from the FB page? Do you want to promote themselves, or do you want to keep in contact with repeated customers?
- Do you have a website? Why? Are you happy with it?
- Do you have enough customers? Are there periods in which you would like to have more guests?
- What type of target do you have? Who do you want to attract? Do your customers correspond to your expectations?
- Do you use other social networks? What do you expect from the social networks?
- How do you check your digital communication?
- Are you satisfied with the contents?
- How many of the likes belong to your target group?
- Are your customers mainly Italian or foreign?
- Is your online communication bilingual? Do you speak any foreign languages?



#### WEB PRESENCE

- Generally, poor web presence:
  - 3/6 structures have a Facebook page
  - only one structure is active on other social networks
  - the structures generally agree on the fact their websites need to be updated (self-managed vs. professional agency)
- Reasons for not having a Facebook page:
  - it takes too much time;
  - it is difficult to use it properly;
  - it is not perceived as a useful tool for promotion.



# EXPECTATIONS WHEN USING FACEBOOK

- Main goals:
  - promote the structure for new customers
  - keep in touch with repeated guests
    - → actual use for the majority
- The Facebook pages were created to keep up with competitors, but they are felt as not having brought positive results – according to some structures, due to the under-employment of this tool



#### **CUSTOMERS**

- The majority would like their web presence to help with getting more guests in given periods of the year
- The general feeling is that the Facebook pages are not effective in promoting the structures to new customers (many likes are either from family and friends or from previous visitors – not necessarily repeated guests)



#### MARKET SEGMENTS

- Wide variety of market segments:
  - couples, families, friend groups
  - many repeaters
  - main goals: leisure (culture); health (thanks to location); VRF (especially for ceremonies) – business tourists are generally less, concentrated during the week
  - generally, more foreigners
- Nevertheless, the structure owners have not targeted a specific segment yet.



## ONLINE COMMUNICATION

- With the exception of one website, all the online tools used by the structures have a bilingual (or multilingual) communication
- Online communication is backed by owners that are able to speak English and (sometimes) other languages



### PROVENANCE OF GUESTS

- Booking.com
  - seen as an important showcase
  - generally, means of the first approach (repeated guests tend to book directly by contacting the structure from the second time on)
- B&B Bergamo & Co. and Visitbergamo websites
- WOM
- At the moment, only one out of 6 owners keeps statistics and checks their provenance in order to plan promotion



## SUGGESTIONS

- TO INTERACT WITH CURRENT CUSTOMERS
- TO ATTRACT NEW CUSTOMERS

The main problems we faced concerned:

- Contents
- Engagement



# TO INTERACT WITH CURRENT CUSTOMERS

#### Inform the guests about your Facebook presence

- When guests check out, remind them verbally to follow your facebook page through a "Like"
- Remind your facebook presence through leaflets put in different places inside the hotel (breakfast room, reception, bedrooms). Provide a QR code on the leaflets for a faster link to the Facebook page.
- "Follow-up" e-mail to thank guests for their stay and invite them to "Like" your page, providing a link to that.



 Provide specific instruction on how to receive notification from your Facebook page





## TO ATTRACT NEW CUSTOMERS

- 1) Analyse the current clientele through:
- Demographic criteria (age, single/couples/families)
- Geographic criteria (nationality)
- Psychographic criteria (reasons, activities in the destination)
- 2) After the analysis, identify the target groups (excursionists, cyclists, families with childrens, etc.)



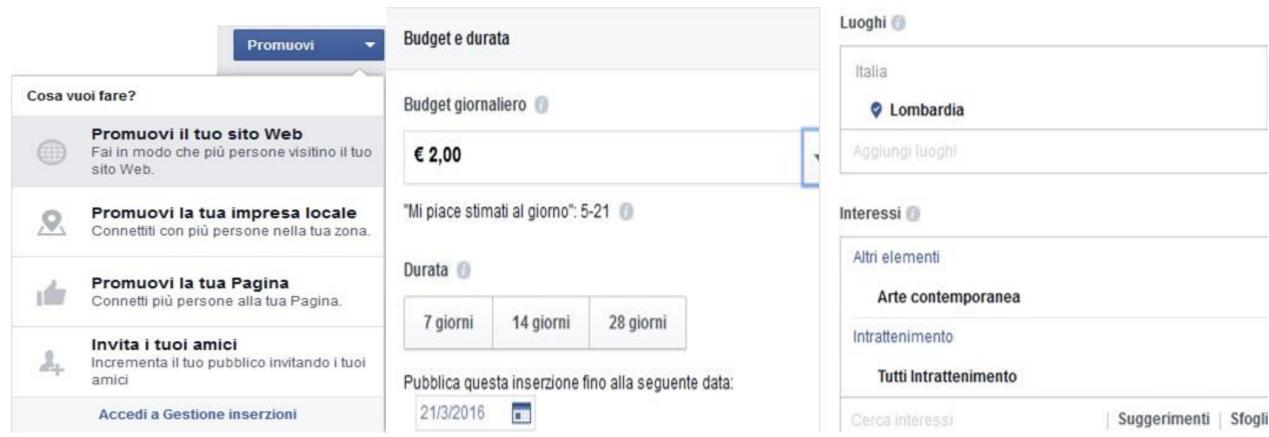
- 3) Search groups of interest on Facebook and improve your visibility:
  - Contact the groups' admins through private message and ask them to share information about your structure among their members.
  - Invite the groups' admins to spend a free stay at your B&B

Examples: Trekking italia Milano, UEC Union Europèenne de cyclisme, ecc.





#### Promote your page through the payment service provided by Facebook



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## **CONTENTS**

#### Communicate through:

- Multimedia contents (photos/videos)
- Bilingual messages (Italian English)
- Hashtag (#)



#### CONTENTS

#### Some ideas for effective contents:

- Speak about your peculiar characteristics (design, food, surroundings, etc.) on both the facebook page and the website
- Inform guests about the certifications and the awarded you obtained (TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence, ecc.)
- Provide info about special offers and holiday packages
- Post guests' photos and videos

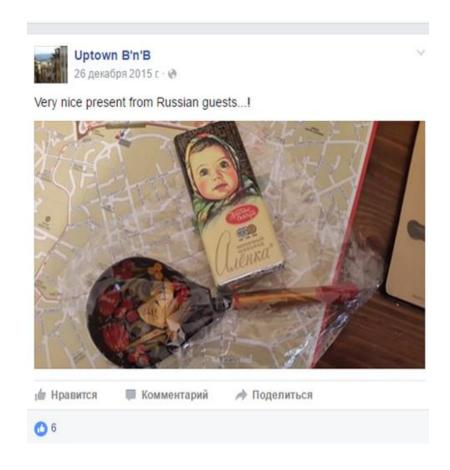


 Share photos/videos/events of the destination or articles that deal with it



#### CONTENTS

- Share pictures of gifts brought by guests





#### CONTENTS

#### Some tools:

- Apps (Trip Advisor, Booking.com, etc.)
- Call-to-action button ("Book now", "Call now", etc.)
- Facebook ads
- Business Story



## **ENGAGEMENT**

 Stimulate the digital engagement asking something to users (their stories, opinions, advice)

e.g. What has been your best moment in Bergamo (place, best experience)?

E.g. e tu come stai festeggiando? (And how will you celebrate?)





### **ENGAGEMENT**

- Share photos with your guests and, if possible, tag them
- Call to action: tell users how you would like they take part in the discussion

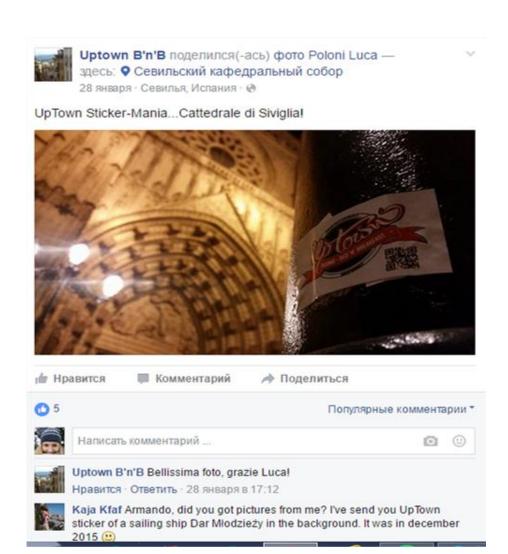
Eg. Click "Like" if..., share if...

- "Share this picture if you'd like to be there now"
- Ask guest to post on your page the picture they have taken in other places in the destination



#### **ENGAGEMENT**

- Memorabilia: a small gift/object that reminds the guests their stay at your structure
- Facebook Contest: Photos, videos, Travel tips
- Create facebook events with partners





# TRAVEL APPEAL



www.travelappeal.com