

# The role of social media as marketing tool for tourism in kenya. case study: kenya...

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



## INTRODUCTION

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

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

Social media is not just for large corporations, small businesses can also reap the benefits of implementing a social media campaign and therefore for many businesses, social media is just one more buzz word they have to wrestle with. However, social media isn't just a buzz word and it's not going away social media can have a profound effect on almost any type of business. ([http://www.housingea.co.uk/an\\_introduction\\_to\\_social\\_media\\_for\\_business](http://www.housingea.co.uk/an_introduction_to_social_media_for_business))

Coming together with the Web 2.0 phenomenon, the birth of social media is busted out in new marketing era. It is becoming a hot topic for its huge influences. The existence of social media earns the attention of people by making them from being passive consumers to active producers in terms of sharing and contributing via networks (Anderson 2008, 63).

That is explanation why most companies today are thinking of applying social media into their business. Its advantages to and effects on

organizations, however, have not been recognized accurately in comparison with other marketing tools.

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

## **1. Scope of the study/backgrounds**

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

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

Social media marketing strategy in an organization defines how the organization uses the social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to achieve a marketing objective for the organization. The social media strategy implements and supports higher-level strategies and

provides markets and customer information which is used for development and adjustments of the organization business strategy. the current approach being used by the case study company on the use of social media marketing shows that the company strategy is not fully implemented hence the company needs more decision on how to maximize the available marketing opportunities to win many customers depending on the improve strategy that they are heading to in terms of using social media marketing to market their company. The scope of the study will create proposals on how the case company can utilize social media marketing principles to achieve an effective market for their company. The outcome of the implementation of the suggested social media marketing principle and strategies will allow Kenya safaris and Tours to allocate enough resources strategically, and maximize market opportunities through the use of social media marketing which will increase the company reputation and increase profits of the company.

### **1. 1 Research context**

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

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

## **1. 2 Purpose of the study and research question**

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

Therefore the research will try to investigate and generate strategies which will assist tourism companies in developing an effective use of social media strategies. The proposal discussed includes implementing major social media marketing strategies and other minor strategies to help the Kenya Safaris and tours achieve its business and organizational goals.

The final result of the research will present a social media marketing strategies which if implemented will result in Kenya Safaris and Tours gaining a competitive advantage in Kenya tourism industry. In theory, the research will try to contribute and generate new ideas from a holistic approach which may be of help in positioning and attaining competitive

advantage by implementing social media marketing strategies. Therefore based on this information the research question for this thesis is work:

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

### **1.3 Limitation of the research**

In this section the main concept are introduced and limitation for the research are presented

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

The theories used in this research content have an international character. Although relating to marketing strategies , the research emphasize social media marketing strategies which concentrated only on matching companies offering the tour facilities to its customers' needs. The technological aspect

of information systems and application that are used in the social media marketing context are out of the scope but are only discussed briefly in terms of the value they can deliver to Kenya safaris and tours. It also essential to highlight that this study is not an effort to solve one specific aspects of developing a social media marketing strategies in details, but rather a research that would contribute to knowledge about various aspects of social media marketing.

#### **1. 4 Structure of the research**

The research consists of six sections and the diagram in figure 1 illustrates the various sections it contains. Section 1 includes an introduction and background information of the research; the theories relevant for the research problem are presented in section 2 and 3. Section 4 entails a description of the methodology approaches chosen for the research. The case study (Kenya Safaris and Tours) company is presented in section 5. Sections 6, 7 and 8 include the empirical research and the discussion concerning the case study and the final conclusion is in section 9. The figure bellows shows how the research was planned and conducted and the linkages in the various sections

Figure1; structure of the thesis

## **2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

### **2. 1 The evolution of social media in marketing business**

The use of social media evolution in marketing business has become fundamentally transformative and is rapidly evolving the architecture of business, communications, and the dissemination of information and

influence. To understand what marketing exactly means it define as a process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return (Kotler & Amstrong 2010)

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

As markets evolve, consumers gain a greater sense of adeptness and perspective. They too learn and adapt. In the process, individuals and the authoritative communities they form, possess a more sophisticated understanding of media literacy, community support, and prowess in new media communication. Consumers have choices and they're increasingly practiced through natural selection. . ([http://www. briansolis.com/2010/01/the-evolution-of-social-media-and-business/](http://www.briansolis.com/2010/01/the-evolution-of-social-media-and-business/) (accessed 1 April 2011)

Then along came the internet and growing rapidly. Unlike the traditional marketing of mass media, internet broadens the scope of marketing in wider range of audiences. It overcomes the limitations of geography and time zones to send the marketing message very fast to target segments. In today'



s life, when customers are no longer being passive in access of information, the use of social media creates opportunities for both businesses and individuals to find their new audiences. Customers become more communicative and better in control than ever. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 19) The changes of marketing are mentioned in the figure below;

Figure 2; Social engagement spectrum (Armano 2009)

Through the social engagement spectrum showed in figure 2, we can see that marketing is experiencing a profound shift from lower engagement to higher engagement level. If the traditional marketing and tradigital marketing are 'push', then it becomes 'pull' with social media nowadays. Even tradigital marketing is more interactive with users but it lacks engagement of customers whereas social media empowers customers to participate in the online community by using social networking sites, for example. It does not mean anymore the technology only but social engagement with people has become a core factor. Thus with higher engagement, it leads to an increase in demand of niche markets, creates new opportunities in the emerging marketplace. (Anderson 2008, 57)

## **2. 2 Social media overview**

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

### **2. 2. 1 Web 2. 0**

The term Web 2. 0 is associated with web applications that facilitate participatory information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and

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collaboration on the World Wide Web. A Web 2. 0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators (prosumers) of user-generated content in a virtual community, in contrast to websites where users (consumers) are limited to the passive viewing of content that was created for them. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_2.0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0) (accessed 27 March 2011))

Goossen (2008) in an interview with Klein suggested the key concepts of Web 2. 0 are the harnessing of social networking, collective intelligence. It more concentrates on the data collected through computers rather than its own technological factor (Klein 2008).

Web 2. 0 is here today, yet its vast disruptive impact is just beginning. More than just the latest technology buzzword, it's a transformative force that's propelling companies across all industries toward a new way of doing business. Those who act on the Web 2. 0 opportunity stand to gain an early-mover advantage in their markets (Musser & O' Reilly 2006).

## 2. 2. 2 Social media

According to B&C (2010), the term “ social media” is widely used nowadays. The first time it appeared was in 2004, after LinkedIn created its social networking application. The applications primarily an online technology tool to allow people to communicate easily, utilizing the Internet to share and discuss information (B&C, 2010). According to Zarrella (2010), social Media is defined best in the context of the previous industrial media paradigm.

Traditional media such as television, newspapers, radio and magazines are

one-way, static broadcasting technologies. Zarrella (2010) argues that magazines and newspapers are distributing expensive content to consumers while advertisers pay for the privilege to insert their ads into the content.

Readers, in turn, have no possibility to send the editors instant feedback in the case they disagree with something. New web technologies have made it easy for anyone to create, and most importantly, to distribute their own content. A blog post, a “tweet” on Twitter, or a YouTube

Video can be produced and viewed by millions virtually for free. Advertisers do not have to pay publishers or distributor’s huge sums of money to embed their ads; now they can create their own interesting content that viewers will flock to (Zarrella, 2010). Also, Weber (2009), states that traditional media such as television, radio and newspapers are providing one-way communication; while social media, on the other hand, allows everyone to publish and to contribute in online conversations. He defines social media as “the online place where people with a common interest can gather to share thoughts, comments and opinions”.

He further states that social media consists of social networks, such as Facebook, branded web destinations, like Amazon. com and ebay. com and companies, such as IBM and Dell. Additionally, Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2009), define social media as online applications, platforms and media which aim to facilitate interactions, collaborations and the sharing of content”. The social media is a new world of unpaid media, created by

individuals and companies on the Internet (Weber, 2009). According to Zarrella (2010), social media comes in many forms:

blogs

micro blogs (Twitter)

social networks (Facebook)

media-sharing sites (YouTube)

social bookmarking and voting sites (Digg, Reddit)

review sites (Yelp)

forums

virtual worlds (Second Life) Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2009) also divides social media into the following key categories

**Blogs**– Comprising individuals or firms online journals that are often combined with audio or video podcasts.

**Social networks**– Applications allowing users to build personal web sites accessible to other users for exchange of personal content and communication.

**Content communities**– Websites for organizing and sharing particular types of content.

**Forums/bulletin boards**– Sites for exchanging ideas and information, usually around special interests.

**Content aggregators**– Applications allowing users to fully customize the web content they wish to access.

## 2. 2. 3. Benefits of social media

Social media marketing experts underscore the advantages of using social media for marketing as the ability to reach a wide audience, two-ways communication, accessibility and viral effect. Social media marketing promises to improve promotional efforts significantly. One of the major advantages of social media marketing is the ability to reach a wide audience breaking down geographic boundaries. Historically communication with others was limited by geographical boundaries and the current technological of the era. Today's social media technologies enable nearly everyone to reach a global audience for interpersonal interaction and exchanging information (Hank, 2008). Web 2. 0 encompasses tools and platforms that enable people from different part of the world to be connected and to exchange information with each other

#### 2. 2. 4 Social media optimization

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

Social Media Optimization is in many ways connected as a technique to viral marketing where word of mouth is created not through friends orfamilybut through the use of networking in social bookmarking, video andphotosharing websites. In a similar way the engagement with blogs achieves the same by

sharing content through the use of RSS in the blogosphere and special blog search engines to understand this work the diagram below shows how various key social platforms are linked

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

### **2.3 Word-of-mouth and social media marketing**

Word of mouth is a pre-existing phenomenon that marketers are only now learning how to harness, amplify, and improve. Word of mouth marketing isn't about creating word of mouth — it's learning how to make it work within a marketing objective.

That said, word of mouth can be encouraged and facilitated. Companies can work hard to make people happier, they can listen to consumers, they can make it easier for them to tell their friends, and they can make certain that influential individuals know about the good qualities of a product or service.

Word of mouth marketing empowers people to share their experiences. It's harnessing the voice of the customer for the good of the brand. And it's acknowledging that the unsatisfied customer is equally powerful.

Word of mouth can't be faked or invented. Attempting to fake word of mouth is unethical and creates a backlash, damages the brand, and tarnishes the corporate reputation. Legitimate word of mouth marketing acknowledges consumers' intelligence — it never attempts to fool them. Ethical marketers reject all tactics related to manipulation, deception, infiltration, or dishonesty.

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

Educating people about your products and services

Identifying people most likely to share their opinions

providing tools that make it easier to share information

Studying how, where, and when opinions are being shared

Listening and responding to supporters, detractors, and neutrals

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

Word-of-mouth marketing (WOMM) Social media marketing (SMM)

Relies primarily on influencers to spread the word. Spreads by itself through the social web and relies on passing message along from person-to-person.

Requires excellent product or service influencers can use, be excited about and pass along. Message must be outrageous, entertaining or provide exceptional value to attract attention and be passed along

Generates brand-awareness and sustained website traffic. Not always relevant to the brand

Engages customers long-term through the product life-cycle. Usually generates a short traffic spike.

Online and offline (15 – 20% online). Online only.

Table 1; comparison between Word-of-mouth marketing (WOMM) and Social media marketing (SMM) (Rijk 2007)

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

Word-of-mouth Marketing Association (2010) has suggested different subcategories of word-of-mouth marketing techniques such as buzz marketing, viral marketing, community marketing, grassroots marketing, evangelist marketing, product seeding, influencer marketing, cause marketing, conversation creation, brand blogging and referrals programs. Brief explanation is given below;

**Buzz Marketing:** Using high-profile entertainment or news to get people to talk about your brand.

**Viral Marketing:** Creating entertaining or informative messages that are designed to be passed along in an exponential fashion, often electronically or by email.

**Community Marketing:** Forming or supporting niche communities that are likely to share interests about the brand (such as user groups, fan clubs, and discussion forums); providing tools, content, and information to support those communities.

**Grassroots Marketing:** Organizing and motivating volunteers to engage in personal or local outreach.

**Evangelist Marketing:** Cultivating evangelists, advocates, or volunteers who



are encouraged to take a leadership role in actively spreading the word on your behalf.

**Product Seeding:** Placing the right product into the right hands at the right time, providing information or samples to influential individuals.

**Influencer Marketing:** Identifying key communities and opinion leaders who are likely to talk about products and have the ability to influence the opinions of others.

**Cause Marketing:** Supporting social causes to earn respect and support from people who feel strongly about the cause.

**Conversation Creation:** Interesting or fun advertising, emails, catch phrases, entertainment, or promotions designed to start word of mouth activity.

**Brand Blogging:** Creating blogs and participating in the blogosphere, in the spirit of open, transparent communications; sharing information of value that the blog community may talk about.

**Referral Programs:** Creating tools that enable satisfied customers to refer their friends

(<http://womma.org/wom101/2/> (accessed 27 March 2011))

### **3. SOCIAL MEDIA AND TOURISM**

#### **3.1 The different forms of social media**

Social media websites come in a wide variety of 'flavours', which are all broadly based around the premise of personal interaction, creating, exchanging and sharing content, rating it and discussing its relative merits as a community. In today's consumer's life, social media have reached the position where very fast-evolving growth and its overwhelming coverage in

digital media scene have been recognized. More than 70% of companies have already used social media and many are unresisting of social media's increase. Social media is approaching to a large number of active Internet users all the time by its variety of platforms which provoke online customers' interaction, facilitate the content creation and sharing (Bloomberg BusinessWeek 2009).

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

### Social bookmarking

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

Behind the scenes these sites anonymously aggregate the data submitted by all of their users, allowing them to sort and rank sites according to their user-defined tags and popularity. One favourite social bookmarking site is [delicious.com](http://delicious.com)

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

#### Social media submission sites

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

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

#### Forums and discussion sites

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

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

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Get closer to your customers: Checking out what consumers are talking about in forums is a great way to find out what makes them tick. The more you can learn about your customers, the better prepared you will be to

engage with them in a meaningful way.

Raise your profile: Contribute to the discussion, offer help and advice, and demonstrate your expertise. Pretty soon people will start to respect and trust your contribution to the community – and that can do wonders for your online reputation and profile.

Nip bad things in the bud: By participating in forums you will be able to spot potentially negative comments or conversations relating to your business or brand and be proactive in resolving them before they escalate

### Media sharing sites

Media sharing sites are incredibly popular it allows communities of members to upload, share, comment on and discuss their photographs. YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)), Y! Video ([video.yahoo.com](http://video.yahoo.com)), MSN Video Soapbox ([video.msn.com/](http://video.msn.com/)) and others do the same for video content. The sites typically allow you to make content publicly available or restrict access to the people you specify, to send content to your ‘ friends’, and even to ‘ embed’ (seamlessly integrate) the content in your blog post or website for others to find it, distribute it and discuss it. Some favourite media sharing are Flickr ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)) and Picasa Web Albums ([www.picasaweb.google.com](http://www.picasaweb.google.com))

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

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## Reviews and rating sites

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

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

## Social network sites

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

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

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

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

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

### Podcasts

Podcasts are, in many ways, just the rich media extension of the blogging concept. A podcast is simply a series of digital media files (audio or video) distributed over the internet. These can be accessed directly via a website or, more usually, are downloaded to a computer or synchronized to a digital media device for playback at the user's leisure. They tend to be organized as chronological 'shows', with new episodes released at regular intervals, much like the radio and television show formats many of them emulate. Users can usually offer their feedback on particular episodes on the accompanying

website or blog. Some favourite podcasts are Podcast.com (www.podcast.com), Podcast Alley (www.podcastalley.com), Podomatic (www.podomatic.com) and even Apple's iTunes (www.apple.com/itunes) offer a convenient way to find, sample and subscribe to

podcasts of interest.

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

### Micro-blogging

Micro-blogging is a relatively new craze that's sweeping through online early adopters, and looks set to explode as more people embrace social media and learn of its existence. It is essentially a short-message broadcast service that lets people keep their 'friends' up to date via short text posts (usually less than 160 characters). Some favourite micro blogging sites are Twitter (www.twitter.com) is the biggest player in this space, Google-acquired Jaiku (www.jaiku.com) and Pownce (www.pownce.com). The real value of micro-blogging isn't necessarily in the individual posts; it's in the collective aggregation of those mini-posts into more than the sum of their parts. When



you receive frequent, short updates from the people you're connected to, you begin to get a feel for them, to develop a better understanding of what they're all about, and to feel a stronger connection with them.

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

## Wikis

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

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

## Wikis for marketers

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

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

Build a strong collaborative community of advocates around your brand:

Wikis can be a great way to encourage constructive interaction and collaboration between people inside your organization and people outside it.

Consumers begin to feel ownership and connection with a brand that encourages, facilitates and values their contribution. That ownership evolves into loyalty and then advocacy: powerful stuff from a marketing perspective, especially when you consider that these contributors will often be online influencers who will go on to sing your praises on other social media sites.

Harness the wisdom of the crowd: How much talent, knowledge and experience do you have inside your organization? Probably quite a lot but it pales into insignificance when compared to the massive pool of talent, experience and expertise you can access online. Retired experts, up-and-coming whizz-kids, talented amateurs, undiscovered geniuses – they're all out there. Wikis give you a simple, powerful and compelling way to draw on and capture some of that collective intelligence. Why not harness a wiki, for example, to help refine the design of your products, come up with your next great marketing campaign, define a more efficient business process, produce and/or augment product documentation, develop a comprehensive knowledge base – or anything else that might benefit from a collaborative

approach

Blogs

In the space of a very few years the widespread popularity and adoption of the blog as a medium of self-expression and communication have caused one of the most fundamental shifts in the history of modern media. Barriers to entry have come crashing down, and easy-to-use blogging platforms have liberated millions of individuals, giving them access to a global audience.

People all over the world are using blogs to report local news, vent their frustrations, offer their opinions, share their visions and experiences, unleash their creativity and generally wax lyrical about their passions. Bloggers read each other's posts, they comment on them, they link to each other prolifically, and the best of them have a massive following of avid and loyal readers. These readers go on to elaborate on what they've read in their own blogs, and spread the word through their own online social networks. Some favourite blogs are ([www. blogger. com](http://www.blogger.com)) and WordPress

([www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com))

Blog is becoming an important component in the business arsenal too, adding a personal component to the bland corporate facade, helping companies to reach out and make human connections in an increasingly human online world. Blogs also helps to show customers a personal side to your business, give them valuable information they can use, provide answers and improve their overall experience of dealing with your company. (Ryan & Jones 2009, 164-165).

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### **3. 2 Definition of tourism**

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

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

### **3. 3 Marketing and Promotion of tourism in Kenya**

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

#### **3. 3. 1 International Tourism**

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

Differentiate Kenya with a distinct market image and positioning in target markets as a quality safari and coastal destination offering a rich diversity of culture, adventure and activity experiences;

Build on the new Kenyan brand image in a manner that reflects the diversity of the tourism product and that has a strong and distinct appeal in the marketplace

Maximize the impact of scarce marketing resources of the government and private sectors by aiming at concentration rather than dispersal of marketing efforts;

Target new segments in established source markets and core segments in emerging markets, particularly in Africa and Asia;

Effectively carry out joint marketing with appropriate partners, particularly with the Kenyan private sector, airlines, KWS, exporters, regional operators; and other tourism and conservation organizations;

Establish overseas offices in key markets and employ marketing representatives through the Kenya Tourist Board on an agency basis in subsidiary markets;

Work closely with EAC partner states to jointly market complementary products and to facilitate multi-destination tourism within the region;

Make full use of, and adapt to, the opportunities afforded by internet and niche marketing to influence consumers and travel agents, and to increase the marketing reach of Kenya in new emerging and niche markets;

Encourage the making of documentary and feature films in Kenya as a highly cost-effective means of increasing destination awareness; and

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

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

### 3. 3. 2 Domestic and Regional Tourism Markets

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

### 3. 3. 3 Domestic Tourism

Kenya's tourism products attract visitors from all over the world. However, most Kenyan nationals have not been able to experience the same

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

#### 3. 3. 4 Regional Tourism

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

#### 3. 3. 5 Cruise Tourism

Government shall seek to re-establish Kenya's role and position in Indian Ocean cruise tourism by encouraging KPA to develop improved cruise ship and passenger reception facilities at the Port of Mombasa. It shall also encourage KPA and other stakeholders to actively participate in the Cruise Indian Ocean Association; attend Sea Trade and other cruise industry trade exhibitions, particularly with a view to attracting North European cruise lines to winter in the Indian Ocean using Mombasa as a homeport; and join together in targeted marketing to individual cruise lines. Government shall also encourage and support measures to re-establish cruise tourism on Lake Victoria. ([http://www.tourism.go.ke/ministry.nsf/doc/Final\\_Draft\\_National\\_Tourism\\_Policy.pdf/\\$file/Final\\_Draft\\_National\\_Tourism\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.tourism.go.ke/ministry.nsf/doc/Final_Draft_National_Tourism_Policy.pdf/$file/Final_Draft_National_Tourism_Policy.pdf) (accessed 21 January 2011))

## **4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES**

The objective of section (section 3) is to explain how the research was conducted detailing the methods used and evaluating reliability and validity of the research.

### **4.1 Research approach**

Due to nature of the study the study a qualitative research approach was used to examine the study. A qualitative method as pointed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) allows respondents freedom of expression, opinion, views, and arguments that might not have been attained explicitly through other approaches. Qualitative research according to Collins and Hussey (2003) also



helps the researcher to discover different aspects during the interview and investigates answers in details

“ A major strength of the qualitative approach is the depth to which explorations are conducted and descriptions are written, usually resulting in sufficient details for the reader to grasp the idiosyncrasies of the situation.”

“ The ultimate aim of qualitative research is to offer a perspective of a situation and provide well-written research reports that reflect the researcher’s ability to illustrate or describe the corresponding phenomenon. One of the greatest strengths of the qualitative approach is the richness and depth of explorations and descriptions.” Myers (2002)

### Main Types of Qualitative Research

**Case study** Attempts to shed light on phenomena by studying in-depth a single case example of the phenomena. The case can be an individual person, an event, a group, or an institution.

**Grounded theory** Theory is developed inductively from a corpus of data acquired by a participant-observer.

**Phenomenology** Describes the structures of experience as they present themselves to consciousness, without recourse to theory, deduction, or assumptions from other disciplines

**Ethnography** Focuses on the sociology of meaning through close field observation of sociocultural phenomena. Typically, the ethnographer focuses on a community.

**Historical** Systematic collection and objective evaluation of data related to

past occurrences in order to test hypotheses concerning causes, effects, or trends of these events that may help to explain present events and anticipate future events. (Gay, 1996)

Table 2; Types of qualitative research methods (James Neill 2006)

#### **4. 2 Data collection and Methods**

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

##### **4. 2. 1 Primary sources**

###### **4. 2. 1. 1 Interviews**

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

##### **4. 2. 2 Secondary sources**

###### **4. 2. 2. 1 Text books**

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

#### 4. 2. 2. 2 Newspapers and related journals

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

#### 4. 2. 2. 3 Past research

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

#### 4. 2. 2. 4 Electronic sources

Internet contains the most updated information about the area of researcher. Even though the internet has much information regarding the researcher area, Collins and Hussey (2003) argue that researchers have to be careful that they do not become victims of information overloads where they can spend long time searching for irrelevant information from the internet. The internet was used to retrieved up-to-date information as well achieves

relating to the researcher areas. The researcher was aware of information bias and information overload as the main disadvantage of using the internet. As a result of this, Web address from newsgroups, companies' Web pages and established search engines were the only ones used.

#### 4. 2. 2. 5 Reliability and Validity

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

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

## **5. CASE STUDY COMPANY**

The case was selected because the aim and the objective of this study was to find out how the social media outline the market place situation and the marketing strategies and programmers that would help the case company

achieved its business and organization goals. Apart from that, the researcher knows more about case company and the research was needed since the case company had not utilized the available social media strategies in marketing their company.

Kenya safaris and Tours is a travel and tour company providing tour operation services in Kenya. The company was founded in early 2006. Being a Kenyan company, Kenya Safaris and Tours reservations staffs have extensive first-hand knowledge of the country to assist and advise the customers in designing their holiday itinerary. The company provide the following services to intervals customers and business customers: luxury tours, chauffeur-driven and self-drive car hire, hotel and lodge reservations , conferences, facilities, camping safaris mountain climbing, beach holidays, water rafting and gorilla safaris. In addition, the company is able to offer their customers tailor-made services upon request.

## **6. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

The main results that were achieved discussed the importance of a social media in an organization and the factors that contribute to a successful social media marketing strategy for the case company. Since the case study company is still new company the information obtain from the research was used to develop the following paragraphs that constitute the case company use of social media to realize its marketing trends and objectives.

### **6.1 Background information**

Kenya Safaris and Tours began operations on 15th January, 2006 and provide safari adventures, sport and travel packages to planning to travel or

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

## **6. 2 A glance at the Kenya tourism**

Kenya recorded the highest number of tourists' arrivals ever at 1, 095, 945 tourists as at 31st December, 2010. This was a 15% growth compared to the 952, 481 experienced in 2009. This figure excludes the cross border tourists' arrivals which could add up to another approximately 700, 000 tourists once the results are fully tallied by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.

The 2010 Tourism performance has surpassed the 2007 record by 4. 5 percent the later being the best recorded year in terms of tourist arrivals and earnings. “ This performance is impressive and is optimistic to achieving Kenya's vision target of 2 million international tourists by 2012 the sector has earned \$1. 8 billion in terms of revenue earnings within the same period. This is the highest tourist revenue ever recorded and it represents an impressive growth of revenue by 18 percent compared to the 2009 revenues.

The Kenya tourism board said the performance was impressive and the sector has shown great resilience in spite of the local and global challenges. The board accrued the impressive performance to aggressive marketing in the new markets and efficient utilization of the resources available.

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Kenya Tourist Board has continued to reposition the destination since 2009 as a high value for high spending tourists and this is paying good dividends. The table below gives a complete Kenya tourism statistics for visitor arrival and departures by purpose of visit

## ARRIVALS DEPARTURES

Year/Quarter	Holiday Visitors	Business Visitors	Transit Visitors	Total Visitors	Holiday Visitors	Business Visitors	Transit Visitors	Total Visitors
1996	795	7100	555	8952	785	799	259	5944
1997	820	8103	756	29808	800	5101	157	5959
1998	804	8101	772	3978	8744	394	066	2904
1999	686	986	8101	9875	6672	985	091	9849
2000	746	994	4107	4948	7746	593	7106	4946
2001	778	298	3138	51,015	772	297	0103	5972
2002	728	892	1152	6973	5742	093	2134	1969
2003	732	686	6163	3895	99744	693	4153	6991
2004	684	0182	1219	11,085	2606	6164	1198	4969
2004	885	6246	4162	21,294	2856	2255	8147	91,259
2005	1,063	2206	179	81,349	11,027	1201	671	61,300
2006	1,087	5226	2137	21,450	91,077	9219	5116	81,414
2008	1,278	5242	2130	91,651	61,232	0232	3124	61,588
2009	936	1109	462	01,107	50891	7108	965	21,065
2010	1,061	2180	698	41,340	21,064	9169	397	41,331

Table 3; Visitor's arrival and departures by purpose of visit (source; ministry of tourism Kenya)

## **6. 3 Results on the company's market analysis**

### **6. 3. 1 Market summary**

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

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

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



### 6. 3. 1. 1 Market demographics

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

Safari travelers are more likely to be new couples or old couples. Kenya Safaris and Tours' primary customers are married couples, ages 25-35 with children and household income over \$ 50, 000. Kenya safari and Tours is planned to be located in the UK.

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

### 6. 3. 1. 2 Markets needs

Kenya safaris travel activities are a specialized products and first-hand knowledge of these activities are necessary in order to effectively promote and sell them. Many potential customers are unsure of the location they wish to reach. Part of the value associated with travel agencies is knowledge they possess about destinations. Customers depend on the agency to provide them with sound advice for a competitive price. Kenya Safaris and Tours should be confident in its ability to do so. Kenya safaris and Tours can save the customers' time and money and help to ensure that customers are satisfied with their vacations-

#### 6. 3. 1. 3 Market Trends

One notable trend in the travel industry is increased deregulation. Deregulation has increased competition and the need for differentiation. In many cases, the price of airfare and other travel-related services has dropped. Additional include the limit of agency commission by many of the larger airlines, increases in adventure travel, and the reduction of profit margins. The UK markets contributed the highest number of tourists to Kenya and this trend is predicted to continue.

#### 6. 3. 1. 4 Market growth

The Kenya tourism industry is growing. Reasons for this growth include a government initiative to promote the industry in foreign markets through the use of social media adverts for example the Magical Kenya on BBC news adverts., 5% annual domestic economy improvements has increased business which in turn boosted domestic business travel agencies.

### 6. 3. 2 SWOT analysis

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

#### 6. 3. 2. 1 Strengths

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

**Management:** Kenya Safaris and Tours manager has a successful record in this industry. His experience and the network of valuable connections he has developed should contribute to Kenya Safaris and Tours' success.

**Location:** Kenya Safaris &Tours is ideally located. Kenya is a popular destination with safari enthusiasts who make Kenya Safaris and Tours target audience profile. The company is also located in the UK which accounts most of the highest numbers of safari travelers to Kenya.

**Experienced staff:** Kenya Safaris and Tours team is experienced in the travel business and in adventure safaris. Most members have over three years

experience. Moreover, the members are willing to spend extra time and effort to build a successful business. In addition with the intangible benefits derived from succeeding in an independent endeavor, Kenya Safaris & Tours is ready to offer profit sharing and potential partnership opportunities to its employees.

Popularity of safari travel: safari activities are very popular, and Kenya safaris and tours is aware that the popularity will continue to grow, Many of the safaris activities such as mountain climbing, honeymoon safaris, and game viewing, have had family connections for many years where families tend to go for safaris after they have been recommended by members of the family who have been on safari.

#### 6. 3. 2. 2 Weaknesses

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

Start-Up status: Kenya Safaris and Tours is a start up business where most of start up companies tends not to perform well.

Limited personnel: Though Kenya Safaris and Tour staff are exceptional, but from the research it shows that the workers had to work long hours with little pays.

Financing: Preliminary estimates of sales and expenditures suggest that Kenya Safaris and Tours will remain financially stable. However, unforeseen expenditures or poor sales will threaten company's cash position, which will be partially vulnerable during the introduction of social media marketing into

the company's operation

### 6. 3. 2. 3 Opportunities

Opportunities are external circumstances o