



The Use of AdWords – a Contributor or an Inhibitor of Marketing Success?

Johannes A Wiid*
Department of Marketing and Retail Management,
University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, Pretoria, South Africa
E-mail: jwiid@unisa.ac.za

Nadine van Rooyen
IRI South Africa
Constantia View Office Estate, Randburg, South Africa

Corresponding author*

Abstract

E-marketing is a fast-developing field of marketing, with new tools constantly emerging in the market. The opportunities within e-marketing provide businesses with a chance to advertise to audiences worldwide without the high costs associated with above-the-line advertising. Many e-marketing tools are available to facilitate marketing and one such tool is Google AdWords. AdWords as it is commonly known is a paid-for search-engine marketing tool offered by Google, the dominant search engine worldwide. Google AdWords allows businesses to bid on keywords that are related to the product or service offering. The top bidder's advertisement is then displayed at the top of the results page when a chosen keyword is searched for in a search engine. A research study was conducted in 2016 with the aim to ascertain star-graded overnight accommodation establishments' attitude towards and intention to use search engine marketing specifically Google AdWords as e-marketing tool. A self-administered web-based survey was conducted to collect data and 278 fully completed and usable responses were received. The study revealed that a minority of respondents are making use of Google AdWords. The respondents who are using AdWords regard AdWords as useful and are above average satisfied with the outcomes of using AdWords. It is clear from the results that Google AdWords is not perceived as an e-marketing tool that decreases marketing expenditure for accommodation.

Keywords: E-marketing; Google AdWords; search engine marketing; pay-per-click; search engine optimisation.

Background

Nine million tourists contributed an estimated R76.4 (\$6.1) billion to the South African Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by visiting the country in 2012 and in 2017 10,29 million foreign tourists (visitors who stayed overnight) visited the country with an estimated contribution of R412,2 (\$32.7) billion to the country's GDP (IOL, 2018 & Smith, 2017). This upholds the notion that tourism is a key contributor to the South African economy (Wesgro₅, 2012:1). The tourism sector offers other benefits to the country, including earning foreign exchange and creating jobs and it is one of the fastest growing sectors in the country (Grant Thornton, 2010:9). The preferred leisure tourism destination among foreign visitors is the Western Cape (Wesgro₅, 2012:1), due to the numerous natural, historical and cultural tourist attractions in the province. These tourist attractions, coupled with its relatively good institutional and physical infrastructure, has resulted in the Western Cape's strong brand as both an international and a local tourist destination.



This is attested by the 3.6 (domestic – 2.5 & international – 1.8), million visitors in 2016, spending R20.6 (\$1.64 at an exchange rate of R12.59 ZAR to \$1 US) billion of which R2.5 (\$0.2) billion was from domestic visitors and R18,1 (\$1.44) billion from international visitors (excluding capital expenditure) during their stay there. Those visitors stayed a total of 20.6 million bed nights of which domestic was 10.4 million and international – 10,2 million nights in the province. (Jooste, 2017 & Lain, 2017).

The importance and role that electronic media play in tourism and in the accommodation sector is highlighted in the Cape Town Tourism's report (2017). This report indicates that the use of social media platforms by tourists grew on a year-to-year basis. Facebook experienced a 15% growth, Twitter 24%, Instagram 155% and YouTube 351%. Statistics also show that more than 50% of travel sales were done online with 60% of online sales being driven from a point of social media engagement (Cape Town Tourism, 2017). Statistics/reports on number of nights spent and electronic (online & social media) activity in relation to tourists' visits is a clear indication that online marketing communication is a critical component of the marketing strategy of overnight accommodation establishments and promotes sustainability.

The marketing communication mix constitutes six elements, namely advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, and e-marketing (Cant, Van Rooyen, 2017; Du Plessis, Bothma, Jordaan and Van Heerden, 2007:3-4; Koekemoer, 2011:7). Each of these elements has its own unique tactics and methodologies. For instance, e-marketing is the application of marketing processes, principles and techniques through electronic media, such as the internet that promotes alternative ways to implement strategies and communicate online. It allows businesses that are located in remote areas to reach consumers twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week in the domestic market or to take on the international market. Various e-marketing tools that are available include, among others but are not limited to websites, online banner advertising, social media, viral marketing, blogging, email marketing, affiliate marketing and search engine marketing (SEM).

Given the importance of the tourism industry to the South African economy and the availability of e-marketing tools, such as search engine marketing (SEM), the question now arises, *“What is star-graded overnight accommodation establishments located in the Western Cape, a well-known tourism hub’s attitude towards and intention to use search engine marketing and more specifically Google AdWords as an e-marketing tool?”*.

The two aspects from the above question, namely overnight accommodation and search engine marketing will be briefly discussed in the sections that follow.

Overnight Accommodation.

All tourist accommodation establishments in the tourist accommodation sector of South Africa comprise star-graded overnight accommodation establishments. Tourist accommodation refers to "...any facility that regularly (or occasionally) provides 'paid' or 'unpaid' overnight accommodation for tourists" according to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (2008:38).

The tourist accommodation sector in South Africa consists of formal service accommodation, guest accommodation, shared vacation, backpackers and hostel accommodation, and caravan and camping accommodation. The differences between the types of accommodation establishments are briefly discussed below. The discussion is based on the descriptions given by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA), (TGCSA n.d.).



- *Formal service accommodation.* This type of accommodation includes hotels and lodges. A hotel provides formal accommodation with full or limited services. This type of establishment has a minimum of four rooms, reception area and dining facilities. The difference between a lodge and a hotel is that a lodge is located in natural surroundings beyond that of an immediate garden area.
- *Guest accommodation.* B&B, country and guesthouses are classified as guest accommodation. The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa differentiate between these accommodation establishments as follows (TGCSA n.d.):
 - *Bed and Breakfast.* More informal accommodation with limited service that is provided in a family (private) home with the owner/manager living in the house or on the property.
 - *Guesthouse:* Can be an existing home, a renovated home or a building that has been specifically designed as a residential dwelling to provide overnight accommodation. It must have more than three rooms and public areas for the exclusive use of its guests. The difference between a guest and country house is that a country house is situated in natural and peaceful surroundings.
- *Shared vacation.* This accommodation type refers to Lifestyle apartments – multi, self-contained accommodation with limited communal facilities and amenities as these are within close proximity and must have a formal reception area and Lifestyle resorts – multi, self-contained accommodation with onsite facilities and amenities.
- *Backpackers and hostel accommodation.* This type of establishment caters for transient guests (travelling public). A backpacker and or hostel is an accommodation facility that provides communal facilities, including dormitories, yet may offer a range of alternative sleeping arrangements.
- *Caravan and camping accommodation.* This accommodation type is a facility that provides space together with ablution and toilet facilities for guests who provide their own accommodation, such as a tent, a motor home and/or a caravan (TGCSA n.d.).

It is clear from the descriptions that each type of accommodation establishment has its unique characteristics and should be graded according to a set of grading criteria developed for the specific type of accommodation establishment.

The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) developed grading criteria for each type of accommodation and graded the accommodation establishment accordingly to maintain standards and quality of the facilities and services rendered. The star insignia of the TGCSA is an approximate indication that an overnight accommodation establishment has been graded and has met a certain standard of quality and service excellence.

An establishment in South Africa can fail grading or receive from a one up to a five star rating, the highest grade depending on the facilities at and services rendered by the establishment. Below follows a brief explanation of the meaning of TGCSA Star grading. The meanings are based on the explanations given by SA-Venues.com.

- One Star: Fair to good (acceptable/modest) quality in overall standard of furnishings, service and guest care. Clean, comfortable and functional accommodation
- Two Stars: Good quality in overall standard of furnishings, service and guest care
- Three Stars: Very good quality in overall standard of furnishings, service and guest care



- Four Stars: Superior (excellent) comfort and quality. High standard of furnishings, service and guest care
- Five Stars: Exceptional quality, luxury accommodation (matching the best international standards). Highest standard of furnishings, flawless service and meticulous guest care (SA-Venues. n.d.)

In summary, the different types of overnight accommodation establishments are graded according to a set of grading criteria that the TGCSA developed for the specific type of accommodation establishment. The star grade insignia of the TGCSA is considered to be an adequate confirmation of the establishment's quality and service excellence that needs to be communicated to the market. One of the many communication channels available to the star-graded overnight accommodation establishments is Search Engine Marketing (SEM).

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is a form of e-marketing aimed at promoting websites by increasing its visibility in search engine results pages (SERPs) through paid and unpaid advertising. (Search Engine Land, 2017). The placement of a website on the first page of SERPs is important, as studies have shown that searchers do not readily pay attention to second and third result pages (Luh, Yang and Huang, 2016:239; Lindsay, n.d.:41). This implies that if an advertiser's website appears after the first page, it will in all probability lack necessary exposure to potential shoppers and generate less website traffic.

The SEM e-marketing tools that can be used to gain website visibility and traffic incorporate search engine optimisation (SEO) and pay-per-click (PPC) programmes (Bergström and Östberg, 2016:7; Jušcius, Labanauskaitė and Baranskaitė, 2016:46; Ramos and Cota, 2006:24). A brief discussion on search engine optimisation and pay-per-click advertising follows.

Search engine optimisation (SEO)

SEO refers to the optimisation of a website in order to appear on the first results page. It is a free form of organic marketing where the architecture of a website is manipulated to boost its rank. This may include the use of-keywords, specific content, and GEO tags to captivate the attention of web-crawlers or spiders (McStay, 2016).

A web-crawler, also known as a search engine spider, is an internet bot that browses the web systematically to index and rank websites according to certain criteria or signals stipulated in an algorithm created by search engines, such as Google and Bing. The criteria in the algorithm, which internet bots use to index and rank websites, are updated regularly and as the number of internet pages is extremely large, web-crawlers fall short of making a complete index. This increases the difficulty of manipulating the ranking on the results page (Fleishner, 2011:17). Despite SEO being free of charge, it is a slow lengthy form of SEM, and it may take considerable time for a website to be shown at the top of result pages.

The paid-for counterpart of SEO is search advertising; it allows a website to be shown instantaneously at the top of the result pages. (Bergström and Östberg, 2016:7; Lee and Seda, 2009:xxii). Search advertising-is discussed in the following section.



Search advertising

Search advertising, also referred to as pay-per-click (PPC) or cost-per-click (CPC), is paid-for advertising, that enables advertisers to bid for ad placements or keywords in search-engine sponsored links, so that they can appear in the top spot on the search engine result pages, when the topic or keyword search is related to the website's content.

Search advertising is an internet-advertising model where the advertiser pays the search engine (publisher) when the advertiser's advert is clicked. This form of advertising is keyword based (Chaffey and Smith, 2017). The purpose is to intentionally appear on search results and draw the attention of the user, and ultimately get them to click on a link; they are then redirected to the advertiser's website, thus creating visibility as well as relevant and desired traffic for the website (Stokes, 2013:264; Fleishner, 2011:18). The advertiser pays a small fee to the search engine every time that the advertisement is clicked.

The advertiser gets a number of benefits for the fee that is paid. According to Hotjar (2017) & Boonze (2018), the major benefits are as follows: Search advertising ...

- *gets the attention of the target audience at the right time.* Users know what they are searching for as they are using keywords. By using search advertising, the advertiser gets his/her content and advertisement to the front of a highly engaged target audience.
- *is easy and quick to implement.* The search advertising campaign can easily be set up in a few hours. It is flexible and content and keywords can easily be changed and tailored around the behaviour of the target audience. It is real-time advertising.
- *is targeted.* Search advertising targets the advertiser's content and advertisement at users based on language and location. It allows small establishments to compete with larger businesses.
- *is measurable.* Search advertising allows for tracking and analysis of the marketing campaign. This allows the advertiser to optimise his/her keyword mix.
- *raises brand awareness.* Search advertising directs and increases traffic to the advertiser's website and thus increases brand awareness.
- *has greater ROI.* Search advertising targets users who are looking of the advertiser's product and services online and it is affordable when compared to other marketing communication channels such as TV and print. The advertiser can control monies spent on advertising.

The success of a search advertising campaign is dependent on the exposure that is offered by the search engines which serve as marketing channels or avenues where the marketing takes place. In other words, search advertising will only work successfully when the search engine is popular and used often. Currently there are five top search engines in the market, including Google, Yahoo, Bing, AOL and Ask. Google has the largest segment (81%) of market share; followed by Bing and Yahoo with 8% each, and finally AOL and Ask who each have 1% of the market share (Ecloudbuzz, 2017:1). Therefore, Google has the largest number of people habitually searching on it. Due to Google's market reach, the article will focus on Google's PPC program, known as Google AdWords.

Aim and methodology

The aim is to ascertain Western Cape establishments' attitudes towards and intention to use search engine marketing, specifically Google AdWords, as an e-marketing tool or channel.



The Western Cape was chosen as a focus area, as this region is a leading tourism destination with a wide variety of attractions for business and leisure travellers (Western Cape Business, 2011). This South African region, with its attractions like Table Mountain, Robben Island, the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, Groot Constantia, winelands, beaches and sunshine attracts the majority of overseas visitors to the country (Wesgro, 2016:3; South Africa Info, 2012). Overnight accommodation establishments were selected, as this sector contributes significantly to the tourism industry, which in turn is vital for the South African economy because it generates needed revenue. Star-graded establishments rated according to the TGCSA standards were chosen, thus ensuring that the data received is more reliable and general. The unit of analysis is an individual establishment that is star-graded and in the Western Cape. A comprehensive list of contact details can be found on the TGCSA website, which was used in the study at hand.

A web-based self-administered questionnaire consisting of 5-Point Likert-scale questions (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was used for data collection. Ethical principles were adhered to throughout the research process. Participants' rights were respected throughout the process of conducting the research, and this research process and methodology was conducted in such a way as to minimise risk to participants. It was important to obtain consent from participants before attempting the questionnaire. Ethical conduct was guided by and based on the principles outlined in the UNISA, College of Economic and Management Science (CEMS) Policy on Research Ethics 2010.

The total population of 1953 star-graded overnight accommodation establishments in the Western Cape were given the opportunity to take part in the research survey. The researcher received 278 usable responses, – a response rate of 13.21%. At a confidence level of 95% and a response distribution of 50%, the response rate calculates an error margin of 5,44% (Raosoft, n.d.). The low response rate resulted in a non-response error; therefore, the results cannot be generalised – it simply provides an indication about the use of Google AdWords. The demographic profile of the respondent group is presented in table 1 below.

As outlined in table 1, almost a third of the respondents come from guesthouses (34%) and almost a third (30%) of the respondents from self-catering establishments (30%). Almost two-thirds (62%) of the respondents have less than five permanent employees. Almost equal portions of the respondents are three-star (42%) and four-star (43%) rated. The majority (67%) of respondents were aware of Google AdWords and less than half (41%) of the respondents who are aware of Google AdWords are using it. More than half (56%) of the respondents who are using AdWords have a four-star grading, and none of the one-star establishments are using Google AdWords.

Table 1: Respondent profile

| Type of Accommodation | n | % | Star Grade of Accommodation | n | % |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Backpackers | 8 | 3 | 1-star | 2 | 1 |
| Bed-and-breakfast | 50 | 18 | 2-star | 14 | 5 |
| Caravanning and camping | 2 | 1 | 3-star | 117 | 42 |
| Country house | 7 | 3 | 4-star | 120 | 43 |
| Guesthouse | 95 | 34 | 5-star | 25 | 9 |
| Hotel | 23 | 8 | | 278 | 100 |
| Lodge | 9 | 3 | | | |
| Self-catering | 84 | 30 | Use of AdWords | n | % |
| | 278 | 100 | Use | 76 | 41 |
| | | | Do not use | 111 | 59 |
| | | | | 187 | 100 |
| Number of employees | n | % | Star grade vs. use of AdWords | n | % |



| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|--------|-----------|------------|
| Less than 5 | 171 | 62 | 1-star | 0 | 0 |
| 5 – 10 | 67 | 24 | 2-star | 2 | 3 |
| 11 – 50 | 28 | 10 | 3-star | 22 | 30 |
| 51 – 100 | 6 | 2 | 4-star | 41 | 56 |
| More than 100 | 6 | 2 | 5-star | 8 | 11 |
| | 278 | 100 | | 73 | 100 |
| AdWords awareness | n | % | | | |
| Aware of AdWords | 187 | 67 | | | |
| Not aware of AdWords | 91 | 33 | | | |
| | 278 | 100 | | | |

The research findings in the section that follows, is based on the 41% (n = 76) of establishments that use Google AdWords as part of their marketing strategy.

Research findings

The main findings on the overnight establishments' success of using AdWords and outcomes of using Google AdWords as e-marketing tool are presented in the section that follows. As depicted in table 1, only 41% (n = 76) of the respondents (n = 187) who are aware of Google AdWords are using it. The low response rate only allows for descriptive analysis on the mentioned topics.

Reasons for lack of awareness and not using AdWords

Those respondents that were not aware of AdWords or using it, were asked to indicate possible reasons for lack of awareness and reasons for not making use of AdWords. The question was poorly answered and a total of 91 usable responses were received. The responses are summarised in table 2 below.

Table 2: Reasons for lack of awareness and not using AdWords (n=91)

| Reasons for lack of awareness and not using AdWords | % | n=91 |
|---|----|------|
| I've never heard of it | 63 | 57 |
| I don't know how to use it | 25 | 23 |
| I don't know it well | 7 | 6 |
| I don't consider it effective | 2 | 2 |
| This establishment only makes use of traditional marketing methods. | 2 | 2 |
| Other | 1 | 1 |

As indicated in table 2, the majority (63%) of the respondents have never heard of Google AdWords; a quarter (25%) of the respondents does not know how to use it; while the minority (2%) consider AdWords as ineffective. A single respondent indicated another reason, "We use websites, such as SA Venues, sleeping out, Safari Now",

Although the question was poorly answered the result indicates that more advertising and communication is required to increase the awareness of AdWords. The next section focus on the success of using AdWords.

Success of using of Google AdWords

Respondents that used Google AdWords were asked to indicate the degree to which they 'Agree' or 'Disagree' with posed statements regarding the success of using Google AdWords. Table 3 presents the distribution of responses that were obtained.



Table 3: The success of using Google AdWords as an e-marketing tool (n=76)

| | Item | 1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Neutral | 4 - Agree | 5 - Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|--|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------------|------|--------------------|
| 1 | Google AdWords is a worthwhile marketing tool for my accommodation establishment. | 0.0% (0) | 5.3% (4) | 23.7% (18) | 46.1% (35) | 25.0% (19) | 3.91 | 0.84 |
| 2 | Google AdWords is a relevant marketing tool for my accommodation establishment. | 0.0% (0) | 3.9% (3) | 21.1% (16) | 50.0% (38) | 25.0% (19) | 3.96 | 0.79 |
| 3 | Our interest in using Google AdWords has increased rapidly over recent months. | 2.6% (2) | 9.2% (7) | 42.1% (32) | 34.2% (26) | 11.8% (9) | 3.43 | 0.91 |
| 4 | Google AdWords is a reliable and credible source of leads. | 0.0% (0) | 9.2% (7) | 32.9% (25) | 40.8% (31) | 17.1% (13) | 3.66 | 0.87 |
| 5 | We are able to calculate the return on investment (ROI) of our Google AdWords tool. | 3.9% (3) | 17.1% (13) | 43.4% (33) | 25.0% (19) | 10.5% (8) | 3.21 | 0.98 |
| 6 | Google AdWords is an effective tool for marketing our establishment on the internet. | 0.0% (0) | 6.6% (5) | 18.4% (14) | 48.7% (37) | 26.3% (20) | 3.95 | 0.85 |

Item 1 in table 3 shows that the majority of respondents indicated that Google AdWords is a worthwhile marketing tool for their accommodation establishment (M =3.91). Item 2 follows a similar tendency with a mean of 3.96 and it is evident that Google AdWords is considered a relevant marketing tool for accommodation establishments. On the other hand, respondents' responses were less positive for item 3, which referred to respondents' interest in Google AdWords over recent months and obtained a mean of 3.43. This indicates that respondents had not been thinking of Google AdWords in recent months. The highest response rate for item 3 was found in the 'Neutral' column at 42.1%. Item 4 yielded a mean of 3.66, indicating that respondents found that the leads obtained from Google AdWords campaigns were valuable, with the majority of respondents indicating that they found the leads to be reliable and credible. Respondents were, however, not positively inclined regarding the ability to calculate the ROI (return on investment) of Google AdWords as an e-marketing tool (item 5). Item 5 had the lowest mean of all the items on this scale (M=3.21). The results for item 5 indicate that the ability to calculate the ROI of Google AdWords is not the most successful aspect of using Google AdWords. Finally, respondents were asked to indicate whether Google AdWords is an effective tool for marketing on the internet. The response was mostly positive, with 48.7% indicating that they 'Agree' and 26.3% that they 'Strongly Agree'. This positive response rate is also reflected in the mean for this item, which was calculated at 3.95.



The items/statements in table 3 are borrowed from the technology acceptance model. Due to the low number of respondents that use Google AdWords and the fact that TAM is well researched and the constructs are confirmed, no confirmatory factor analysis was performed.

Cronbach's Alpha determines the reliability of the theme *Perception of Google AdWords as an e-marketing tool*. The Cronbach's Alpha calculated for this scale is 0.90, therefore this scale is considered reliable. Table 4 presents the Cronbach's Alpha, mean and standard deviation of the overall scale.

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha: Attitude towards the use of Google AdWords

| Measure | Cronbach's Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---------|------------------|------|--------------------|
| Value | 0.90 | 3.69 | 0.87 |

Usefulness of Google AdWords as an e-marketing tool

A five-point Likert question ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was posed to respondents who currently use Google AdWords to determine the outcome from the use of Google AdWords as an e-marketing tool. Table 5 shows the percentage distribution for each of the seven items.

Table 5: Outcomes of Google AdWords

| Item | 1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Neutral | 4 - Agree | 5 - Strongly Agree | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------------|------|--------------------|
| 1 Our Google AdWords campaign has increased our sales | 0.0% (0) | 10.5% (8) | 42.1% (32) | 36.8% (28) | 10.5% (8) | 3.47 | 0.82 |
| 2 Our Google AdWords campaign has improved our exposure in the market | 0.0% (0) | 9.2% (7) | 18.4% (14) | 57.9% (44) | 14.5% (11) | 3.78 | 0.81 |
| 3 Our Google AdWords campaign has decreased our marketing expenditure | 13.2% (10) | 30.3% (23) | 43.4% (34) | 10.5% (8) | 2.6% (2) | 2.59 | 0.94 |
| 4 Our Google AdWords campaign has provided increased insight into the marketplace | 0.0% (0) | 14.5% (11) | 44.7% (34) | 35.5% (27) | 5.3% (4) | 3.32 | 0.79 |
| 5 Our Google AdWords campaign has improved the development of customer relationships | 0.0% (0) | 16.0% (12) | 57.3% (43) | 24.0% (18) | 2.7% (2) | 3.13 | 0.70 |
| 6 Our Google AdWords campaign has resulted in more loyal customers | 0.0% (0) | 18.4% (14) | 55.3% (42) | 22.4% (17) | 3.9% (3) | 3.12 | 0.75 |
| 7 Our Google AdWords campaign has improved the traffic to our website | 0.0% (0) | 7.9% (6) | 21.1% (16) | 52.6% (40) | 18.4% (14) | 3.82 | 0.83 |



It is evident from table 5 that the majority (47.3%) of respondents found that Google AdWords had increased their sales (item 1; M=3.47). Item 2 had a higher mean than item 1 at 3.78, with a strong majority (72.4%) of respondents indicating that Google AdWords improved their exposure in the market. Item 3 had the lowest mean of 2.59 and the highest standard deviation at 0.94. This result indicates that the respondents did not find that Google AdWords reduced marketing expenditure. The highest response rate for item 3 was obtained in the 'Neutral' column, with 43.4% of respondents. Item 3 was also the only item that received a response in the 'Strongly Disagree' (13.2%) column. The overall response to item 4 was positive with a mean of 3.32 and a standard deviation of 0.79.

Respondents did not see Google AdWords as a tool that improved the development of customer relationships (item 5, mean=3.13) or that using Google AdWords resulted in more loyal customers (item 6, mean=3.12). Finally, item 7 received a positive response, with 71% of respondents agreeing that Google AdWords improved traffic to their website. Item 7 resulted in the highest mean for the question at 3.82 and a standard deviation of 0.83.

The items/statements in table 4 are borrowed from the technology acceptance model. Due to the low number of respondents that use Google AdWords and the fact that TAM is well researched and the constructs are confirmed, no confirmatory factor analysis was performed.

To determine the reliability of the theme *Perceived benefits of using Google AdWords as an e-marketing tool*, the Cronbach's Alpha was calculated and found to be 0.83. Due to the acceptable threshold for Cronbach's Alpha being 0.7, and the calculated Cronbach's Alpha being 0.83, this scale is deemed reliable.

Table 6: Cronbach Alpha: Intention to use Google AdWords as e-marketing tool

| Measure | Cronbach's Alpha | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---------|------------------|------|--------------------|
| Value | 0.83 | 3.32 | 0.81 |

From table 6 it is evident that the overall mean for the Likert scale was 3.32, and the overall standard deviation was calculated at 0.81. These results indicate that respondents think that Google AdWords is useful as an e-marketing tool in terms of the marketing aspects addressed in the question.

Conclusion

The South African tourism industry largely comprises of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME's). The accommodation sector, which is a subsector of the tourism industry, largely comprises of major hotel groups such as Sun International, African Pride Hotels and InterContinental Hotels Group. Therefore, small businesses are forced to operate small-scale establishments such as bed-and-breakfasts, guest houses and backpacking hostels to compete (Joseph, 2013:11). It can be deduced that small businesses in the accommodation sector are representing small businesses in the manufacturing, transportation, financial and construction sectors. The findings in terms of marketing related issues and experiences are based on the responses received from backpackers, bed-and-breakfasts, caravanning/camping venues, country houses, guesthouses, hotels, lodges and self-catering enterprises, other small businesses in the accommodation sector; therefore the conclusion is to a certain extent applicable by association to other small business sectors. The results of this article can thus be broadly applied to this larger view of the small business sector.



The article examines the success and outcomes of using Google AdWords as an e-marketing tool for Western Cape star-graded accommodation. AdWords is the search engine Google's pay-per-click (PPC) program. Pay-per-click is one of two search engine marketing (SEM) methods that can be used for the advert to appear on the first page of the search results when potential consumers use the search engine to search the web by using one of the advertiser's chosen keywords.

Theoretically, the use of Google AdWords offers businesses the opportunity to increase access to target markets at any time of the day, in any geographical location, and at a self-stipulated budget (Business Partners Ltd, 2012). It is also known that effective marketing can increase exposure to markets, create a competitive advantage and increase profitability for star-graded accommodation establishments (El-Gohary, 2010:216).

The profile of the establishments that responded to the study indicated that the majority were guesthouses, had less than five permanent employees, and were four-star establishments. The profile, in terms of Google AdWords, indicated that the majority of the respondents are not aware of Google AdWords, the minority of the respondents who are aware of AdWords are using it, and the majority of the respondents who are using AdWords have a four-star grading.

The theme success of using Google AdWords obtained a mean of 3.69, indicating respondents experience above average success in the use of AdWords and it can be deduced that they have a positive attitude towards Google AdWords as an e-marketing tool. The standard deviation of 0.87 indicated that the data clustered closely around the mean. The theme usefulness of Google AdWords as an e-marketing tool yielded a mean score of 3.32 and a standard deviation figure of 0.81. These scores indicate that respondents are above-average when it comes to satisfaction with the outcomes of using AdWords as an e-marketing tool. It can be concluded that respondents generally felt positive and are inclined to continue using Google AdWords as an e-marketing tool.

From the results, a very small percentage of respondents indicated ineffectiveness of AdWords as a reason for not using it. The respondents who do use Google AdWords found that it adds value to their marketing endeavours. The results further indicate that accommodation establishments do not perceive AdWords as an e-marketing tool that could decrease marketing expenditure. This finding could be attributed to AdWords being perceived as an additional marketing tool to the accommodation establishments' existing marketing tools, such as advertisements, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and thus it is considered as additional expenditure rather than a replacement of existing marketing expenditure.

A recommendation resulting from this study is firstly to increase the awareness and availability of AdWords as an e-marketing tool to accommodation establishments and small businesses in general. Secondly, accommodation establishments and small businesses in general should be made aware of the added value of AdWords to their existing marketing endeavours. An increased awareness of AdWords will potentially improve the overall marketing effectiveness of accommodation establishments as well as small businesses in general.

Due to the specific parameters of this article namely, having only focused on accommodation establishments that are star-graded in the Western Cape, it is recommended that, in order to broaden research on the use of AdWords as an e-marketing tool, future researchers could study other regions within South Africa, or the world. As many of the accommodation establishments can be regarded as small and medium businesses, the research should be extended to include and cover small businesses in other sectors as well.



The entrepreneurial use of AdWords as an e-marketing tool can be regarded as contributor to marketing success and not as an inhibitor.

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