An evaluation of digital marketing applications in airline sector

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Abstract

In the age of digital transformation , enterprises use digital marketing practices effectively in order to increase customer loyalty considering customer relationship management, to create difference and to provide competitive advantage. The airway sector, where the acceleration is fast and the competition is high, aims to present fast and secure user experience and make the customer live a different traveler experience by using all technology and marketing related platforms. Research problem is that it is a necessity for airline brands to digitalize by utilizing the richness of technology and to offer digital applications to consumers at the local / global platform. The aim of this study is to investigate the digital marketing strategies of a number of national and international airway companies such as e-mail marketing, web marketing, social media marketing and mobile applications and to analyze the positioning of digital marketing applications. Because digital marketing is the leading actor of marketing and it is presented as the real throne of virtual world in the airway sector. For this reason, best practices from Turkey and abroad were analyzed in the context of the effect of digital marketing on the customer relations management by using descriptive method and screening method. The findings of the research shows that, by the changes in the customer expectations and demands, the airway companies try to use the digital marketing tools effectively. However, the usage of right strategy for digital management is important to make difference and compete in the airway sector.

Keywords: Digital marketing; social media; customer relationship management; airway sector; mobile application.

Introduction

With the developments in information and communication technologies, new moves that were unfamiliar before social media and digital platforms, which are at the center of life, have been added to marketing chess. These innovations, which are very important in terms of marketing activities that affect the consumption activity of the target audience, facilitate globalization and internet access, the expansion of electronic commerce and competition, the need for people who develop marketing strategies to reach consumers through new media and communication technologies; and the rapid steps towards developing digital strategies are revealed as inevitable.

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In this study, by emphasizing the aviation sector at digital marketing, in the first section digital marketing and customer relationship management, in the second part an overview of digital marketing in the airline sector, and in the third main section digital marketing application types are examined. In the conclusion part of the research; in terms of customer relationship management, it is revealed how airline companies are investing in digital marketing strategies, constantly following the current situation and presenting the newest product to the customer in the fastest way due to intense competition conditions.

The effect of digital marketing on customer relationship management is analyzed by using descriptive method and relational research method; digital marketing techniques in the world and in our country are applied to the subject through the examples applied in airline companies. Descriptive studies define the status of a relationship. By the method of description and relational approach, the subject is better understood, the relationships are determined and the researcher makes predictions.

The airline companies included in the sample were selected using one of the random sampling methods; non-judgmental sampling method because these companies follow the best strategy in terms of digital marketing in the world and Turkey. Sector applications were examined by the information obtained from the airline companies such as; American Airlines, British Airways, Delta Airlines, Virgin Atlantic, United Airlines, Easy Jet, Southwest Airlines, Turkish Airlines and Pegasus Airlines. Digital marketing applications of these case studies depicting airline industry in the world and in Turkey were analyzed in a relational context. The airway companies whether it is low-cost or not try to adapt the digital transformation. In this case all the airway companies have various digital campaings and tools for marketing. While the use of big data is effective for companies, it may be distracting for customers. The companies should have optimum digital marketing strategies in order to compete in this upgrowing sector.

A Digital Overview of the Customer Relationship Management to Marketing

Postmodern consumer sees consumption as happiness and freedom in the modern era where new life forms are created (Odabaşı, 2009, 165). "*In marketing strategies, public relations especially contribute to better recognition of the enterprise and the product, to create a new market, to create and maintain the desired image, to gain reputation and to promote the product or service*" (Peltekoğlu, 2012, 69). In addition to the traditional methods, it is inevitable to apply new trends in the development of marketing communication. Digital marketing and customer relationship management concepts interact with each other in the context of conducting an effective customer relationship management policy in our age, where the consumer communicates with the messages sent by the digital world while working and following the daily life.

Customer relationship management is a way of understanding the behavior of customers (Swift, 2001, 12). By the new communication technologies and digital marketing techniques, to attract new customers, to increase customer loyalty and to increase profitability have been possible. The success rates of companies in all customer relationship management processes that should be applied to increase customer satisfaction, increase sales revenues, campaign turnover rates, customer retention and customer loyalty,; and toreduce service, operation and marketing costs are being measured by using digital platforms.

When the phases of customer relationship management are evaluated according to Peppers and Rogers' IDIC model, the importance of digital marketing methods in customer relationship management process can be understood. Customer's needs, desires, things they love and are affected and inspired, goals, relationships, experiences, collaborations, expectations, information, skills, what they pay attention to, activities, how they communicate, their beliefs, ideas values, priorities, choices, motivation, personalities and behavior; people they admire, the issues they face, ; how they define themselves; their time, energy, lifestyle, social class, culture, subculture, age, family, education, hobbies, interests, problems and many more must be collected to possess information. For this reason, the new media and communication technologies are to record the information

about the purchasing such as , the day, amount, price;promotional activities, the client and the organization's interactions such asthe number of web page visiting, call centre calls, e-mails, ; customer preferences and info, customer info of. Customer differentiation via segmentation and scoring, interaction and customization of products and services using recorded data are the effective use of information technologies in this process (Peppers and Rogers, 2004, 68).

Digital Marketing and Airway Sector

Digital marketing has contributed to the active and bidirectional communication of the brand with the customer (Varnalı, 2010, 38-51). In order to promote the brand, digital marketing carries out commercial activities by using mobile applications, web and other new media platforms. Interactive marketing, online marketing, e-marketing and web marketing are the other alternative terms used for digital marketing (Altındal, 2013,1147).

The transformation of customer experience is the cornerstone of digital transformation (Westerman et al., 2014, 41). With the help of digital technologies, advertisers prepare numerous direct, online and experiential campaigns to be closer to the customer. These campaigns include niche database advertising and award-winning card layouts, digital tape ads, pay as you go online, rich text ads, branded web sites, viral ads, branded social networks, in-game ads (advergames), interactive virals and entertainment ads, SMS texts, online blogs, text, e-mail and mass media. Efforts to be closer to the customer are described in four stages; The first stage is to talk to the consumer; the second phase is to establish a dialogue; the third stage is to participate in dialogues and to become an active customer; and the fourth stage is to make the customer have a dual role as a consumer and advocator of the brand. It is also necessary to draw attention to the fact that this platform, which has unlimited customer freedom in relation to digital marketing that allows brands to interact with customers without space limits, cannot be controlled by the brands and that utmost care should be taken in respect of the risks arising from this situation (Öztürk, 2013, 50).

Digital marketing has been very important in order to meet customer needs and strengthen interaction with customers in the airline sector. Would you like to get rid of the narrow lenses of the survey and focus groups and hear the voice of your final customer? Social media gives this possibility. Would you like your customers to remain committed to your developing brand? Mobile computing allows this. Would you like to make better predictions to deliver a truly personalized experience? Customer analysis gives this possibility (Westerman et al., 2014, 41).

Digital marketing started to be used by the customer at the stages of booking with the mobile phone or the computer, at boarding process with the smartphone application of the airline company, flight process, baggage delivery, and even ataccessing to hotel, car rental and at many more services of arrival. The preferences, travel habits, behaviors and many more data of the airline companies are stored in their flight, mile, score collection cards or systems. This data is considered as the stages of customer relationship management and offers customised promotions.

Airline companies collect the data of customer's call history, payment history, baggage delivery information, departure & arrival dates andtimes, sales made during flight & duty free, food preferences during flight, hotel booking and car rental,; analyze this data and present customised products to target customers (https://www.digitaldoughnut.com/articles/2017/march/how-airlines-are-using-big-data , 2017).

In addition to providing customized products, it is known that new technologies have a positive effect on improving marketing studies. Customers' preferences for travel can be analyzed and if the search is made for a country, promotional or affordable flights to that country can be provided to the customer in different ways.

The digital marketing implementations can be categorized as follows:

- E-mail Marketing
- Social Media Marketing and Social Seating
- Web Page Marketing
- Search Engine Ads

- Mobile Applications

These digital implementations are indicated in general from a large perspective by analyzing the airway companies' examples.

Many digital marketing strategies are used by airlines. E-mail marketing is the most frequently used customer relationship management. Airline companies can segment target audience lists using customer relationship management technologies by providing highly targeted campaigns to customers who are willing to respond. In e-mail shipments, detailed promotions can be sent according to the customer's purchase history. There are many parameters in e-mail marketing in airlines. For example, in e-mail campaigns during the winter months, customers are most likely to do their best to spend their holiday in hotter destinations (http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/thedanysblog/2016/02/01/how-airlines-interact-with-their-customers-through-digital-marketing/ , 2018).

E-mail marketing is one of the effective ways of getting new customers, increasing the loyalty of the existing customer, increasing brand awareness, communicating campaigns, catching hints about the customer through the forms that are requested to be filled, and promotion. While the rate of e-mail used in marketing in 2010 was more than 92%, the popularity of social networks increased, the use of direct messaging programs was very intensive and the number of unwanted messages increased. E-mail marketing has become effective again when communication and advertisements became available from mobile devices. Sending e-newsletters e-mail, campaigns and e-mail promotions to customers increases the number of clicks on the website of the company. Thus,the right message is provided to the target audience at low cost and the feedback can be measured easily as customer information is recorded (Mestçi, 2017, 39).

E-mails by airlines are highly effective to create customer loyalty, since the single click rate is 72% higher than in other e-mails(http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/thedanysblog/2016/02/01/how-airlines-interact-with-their-customers-through-digital-marketing/ , 2018).

Social media marketing is using social networks, online communities, blogs, wikis or other collaborative media for marketing, sales and customer service purposes (Öztürk, 2013, 200). Companies can use more media such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn and Flickr to provide more interaction with their customers. Through social media, companies can learn what their customers think about their brands, can promote their products to a wider range of potential customers and can increase brand awareness. However, there are also risks arising from the ability of the consumer to freely share ideas and experiences in social media marketing. Since this platform is an area that needs more attention in terms of control and management than other traditional marketing channels, it is of utmost importance for companies to manage professionally in terms of follow-up, content, services and feedback.

Today, the presence of a company in social media is a necessary channel for the company's promotion, information transmission and interaction with the customer. In the airline sector, a new concept called "Social Seating" developed. Airline companies can now free their customers to choose their companions who share social media profiles (http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/thedanysblog/2016/02/01/how-airlines-interact-with-their-customers-through-digital-marketing/ , 2018). These social networks are welcomed intensely for those who want to experience this preference in the airline sector, but also brings the risks of discrimination on issues such as race and gender in terms of the Social Seating concept.

The website, which is now used as an active business tool, is seen as an open store that works 7/24 effectively. It is a platform designed to make advertising and marketing of companies. Having an easy-to-use website, understandable menus, effective design, constantly updated and satisfying content, easy-to-download sites such as an effective web page marketing issues are important for customers' preferences. The quality of the products and services provided on the website and the convergence with the target audience are also important points for easy communication and interactive web site marketing (Mestçi, 2017, 47).

In the airline industry, which is one of the most intense competition sectors, web marketing is a highly used marketing method, and it is effective in terms of customers' preference for an easy, understandable, and user friendly web page.

The search engines show the search results on the page where the top and right paid ad slots are located. With Google Adwords, Yahoo Overture, and Microsoft adCenter, it is possible to issue ads that are shown by keywords in these areas and are priced on clicks. When it will be shown is determined by the advertiser and the performance of ads can be checked in real time (Varnalı, 2012,74).

As in all sectors, it is important to be at the highest ranking in search engines in the airline industry as well. In this context, search engines such as Skyscanner and KAYAK search engines are the ones preferred by airline companies.

Mobile advertising, including marketing activities to deliver advertisements to customers via mobile networks (mobile phones, individual digital assistants, etc.) using a non-fixed network, is defined as an over and frequent interaction at the same time, and demonstrates the characteristics of user control, communication management, concurrency, connectivity, gameplay and two-way communication. Mobile applications that are mainly used by mobile phones have become the most frequently used applications in today's advertising world in order to allow direct contact of the customer and marketing managers (Öztürk, 2013, 112).

Another way to interact with customers in airline companies is through online booking and ticket purchase. In addition to improving the customer experience, these processes provide the company with a large customer database, which provides information for future marketing campaigns. Mobile marketing is mainly manifested by mobile phone applications, and it is observed that transactions such as ticket searching, booking, and online check-in can be realized in a more user-friendly and fast way through these applications, as well as increasing customer loyalty. The use of passenger information stored, also causes negative criticism of many airline companies. The purpose of the airlines is to provide a better experience. The fact that the flight crew has some information about the passengers on the plane (allergies, preferences, nationality, etc.) may be useful only for food service.

It would not be wrong to say that digital strategies have an impact on product pricing strategies. It is natural that the airlines which use digital marketing effectively because of the many demanding routes, the payment behaviors of the customers, the season status, and the many factors affecting the ticket prices, are one level ahead in terms of competition.

The Aim of the Research

Advances in technology have led to brands developing digital marketing strategies in the competition game. The aim of this study is to investigate the digital marketing strategies of a number of national and international airway companies such as e-mail marketing, web marketing, social media marketing and mobile applications and to analyse the positioning of digital marketing applications. Digital marketing is the leading actor of marketing and is presented as the real throne of virtual world in the airway sector.

Methodology

The practices in the sector are depicted by the descriptive method and screening method. The purpose of the screening method is to identify a phenomenon. In order to make this definition, the data obtained from the rich source are scanned according to the purpose of the research. The scanned data allows generalization. In this context, best practices from Turkey and abroad were analysed in the frame of the effect of digital marketing on the customer relations management by using descriptive method and screening method.

The national and international leading airway companies comprise the sample of the research. Accordingly, the digital marketing implementations of the leading airway companies from the world; British Airways, Delta Airlines, Virgin Atlantic, United Airlines, Easy Jet and Southwest Airlines, Turkey's leading airway companies; Turkish Airlines and Pegasus Airlines were described in the research.

Findings of the Research

With the increasing globalization of air transportation and the increasing importance of airline companies in marketing in terms of competition, the use of digital marketing and database based studies from the new marketing trends of both high-end airlines and low-cost airlines has increased. At low cost, it has been beneficial to examine the successful examples of digital marketing strategies to ensure the fastest and most reliable user experience to the consumer, and to examine the national and overseas examples which use big data accurately and effectively.

The Analysis of Digital Strategies and Implementations of Airline Companies in the World and Turkey

Digital Marketing Strategies of Airline Companies in the World

In order to create a difference, including the consumer in the product and to be closer to the customer; digital advertising, campaign examples of some of the highly recognized airlines abroad were analyzed.

American Airlines has booked a bomb strategy to remind customers who have booked but have not yet purchased their tickets. This e-mail offers lower rates and best recommendations compared to the information on booking (http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/thedanysblog/2016/02/01/how-airlines-interact-with-their-customers-through-digital-marketing/ , 2018).

In a cross-channel campaign with more than a million views on YouTube, British Airways has connected customers with an interactive billboard campaign called "Magic of Flying", and its success is driven by motivating customers to redirect to its branded site using #lookup hashtag (http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/thedanysblog/2016/02/01/how-airlines-interact-with-their-customers-through-digital-marketing/ , 2018). Again British Airways uses a feature called in "Know Me", which provides in-depth analysis of data to provide customised results. Describing customers as "busy people with no time for irrelevant offers", British Airways transforms customer data into special and targeted offers as "next best offer" (https://www.digitaldoughnut.com/articles/2017/march/how-airlines-are-using-big-data, 2017).

Delta Airlines introduced an application that allows customers to monitor their luggage from their mobile devices. Although the application actually only contains the baggage information used by Delta personnel, it was able to be downloaded by more than 11 million (guarantors!) customers (https://www.digitaldoughnut.com/articles/2017/march/how-airlines-are-using-big-data, 2017). Delta Airlines used customers' travel experience information but got a negative reaction. The customers were unhappy when they realized that their personal information was recorded and used by Delta Airlines' website (http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/thedanysblog/2016/02/01/how-airlines-interact-with-their-customers-through-digital-marketing/, 2018). Although the use of big data is risky for the customer, the pros always outnumber the cons.

Some high-cost airlines offer new technologies to interact with their customers. Virgin Atlantic, for example, was the first airline to announce in 2011 to allow passengers to experience the advantages of Google Glass technology as an innovative pilot project on arrival at London Heathrow Airport in 2016. The staff of the airline's upper-class wing will also be using Google Glass and other applicable technologies to deliver the highest technology and customised products to the customer (https://www.virgin.com/travel/google-glass-arrives-virgin-atlantic, 2018).

United Airlines uses the smart "collect data, detect, take action" system that can analyse 150 variables in a customer profile. With this system, everything from their previous purchases to customer prioritization is measured in order to offer a customised offer. This system increased the revenue of United Airlines by more than 15% a year (https://www.digitaldoughnut.com/articles/2017/march/how-airlines-are-using-big-data, 2017). The investment of EasyJet in an artificial intelligence algorithm that optionally determines seat pricing in real time is a good example of the use of digital data (https://www.digitaldoughnut.com/articles/2017/march/how-airlines-are-using-big-data, 2017). Southwest Airlines has partnered with NASA to identify possible security issues. As a result of this partnership, the airline built an automated system with the ability to use large-scale data sets to use the machine learning algorithms and warn about anomalies and prevent potential accidents (https://www.digitaldoughnut.com/articles/2017/march/how-airlines-are-using-big-data, 2017). Southwest Airlines uses a speech analytics tool that allows customer service representatives to understand the details of each customer interaction recorded. In addition, data from various online channels such as social media are analysed to get more information about customers in real time (https://www.digitaldoughnut.com/articles/2017/march/how-airlines-are-using-big-data, 2017).

Table 1. Digital Marketing Implementations at International Airway Companies

American Airlines	Effective e-mail to unsaved bookings
British Airways	- YouTube cross channel campaign;" Magic of Flying" -"Know Me" application
Delta Airlines	"Mobile baggage monitoring" application for the customer
Virgin Atlantic	Google Glass technology
United Airlines	"Collect data, detect, take action" application
Easy Jet	Optional seat pricing with artificial intelligence
Southwest	-Use of speech analytics tool -Digital system developed jointly with NASA to prevent crashes

Digital applications of international airlines which can be summarized in Table1 are functional in terms of creating brand awareness and loyalty of the target audience by attracting the attention thanks to technology. The possibilities of mobile computing and social media provide the consumer with customised experiences, touching the mind and heart of the target audience.

Digital Marketing Strategies of the Airline Companies in Turkey: Turkish Airlines and Pegasus Airlines

In Turkey, electronic limitations on text messages and electronic mail transmission upon the implementation of the Law numbered 5809 on Regulation of Trade on 01.05.2015 has further increased the importance of digital marketing. Turkish Airlines and Pegasus Airlines, which are the leading companies of the Turkish aviation industry, offer competitive digital marketing strategies. Both airlines use highly successful programs to improve customer loyalty and drive customer retention by flight search engines, such as mobile applications, loyalty cards, social media campaigns, e-mail marketing, web marketing, search engine optimization, skyscanner, etc. Airlines offer many marketing elements such as promotional sales, alternatives for additional sales, to the customer effectively.

"Loyalty" is also preferred by Turkish Airlines and Pegasus. If you participate in these programs, you will be given a card and a membership profile, so you will have many advantages in your travels. These benefits are reflected in your card and membership in the form of points or miles that you can use for additional services on your next flights or flights with loyalty programs. Turkish Airlines loyalty program called Miles & Smiles is not only a flight card, but also a credit card by Garanti Bank. Many hotels, car rental companies, restaurants, gas stations and health facilities, providing special discounts and extra miles to provide Miles & Smiles users a global team of privileges, travel experiences at the airport with a special experience make the buying a pleasant experience (https://www.milesandsmiles.net/, 2018).

Pegasus Plus card, which is a loyalty program of Pegasus Airlines, also offers a credit card function by ING Bank and it offers various kinds of facilities to customers not only during the flight, but also for seat selection, extra baggage, reservation of optional ticket, meal order, hotel selection, car rental and insurance transactions (https://www.flypgs.com/pegasus-plus, 2018).

The aim of this research is to examine the prominent ones in the Turkish digital marketing practices of Turkish Airlines, which has been trying to reach billions of people around the world by effectively using social media through advertising and digital marketing campaigns and communication activities.

Turkish Airlines

Turkish Airlines became the winner of the Social Media Awards Competition Turkey 2017 which measures the social media performance of brands and agencies based on the objective data oin cooperation with BoomSonar and the Marketing Turkey. Among more than 50 categories, nearly 350 campaigns were evaluated in the SocialBrands Data Analytics Awards category. Turkish Airlines became the owner of Grand Prix, the biggest prize of the competition, for its social media activities (http://www.trendweek.com/social-media-awards-turkey-ile-sosyal-medyanin-en-iyileri-odullendirildi/, 2017).

Turkish Airlines launched a program named the mascot "Wingo" in 2012, inspired by a wild goose and announced all promotional flights by it. By Wingo of Turkish Airlines, domestic and international flights were informed at favorable prices on the home page of the website. Also Turkish and English promotional film for the mascot Wingo and the video sharing site was presented to the followers through the social networks(http://www.marketingturkiye.com.tr/haberler/thynin-promosyon-yuzu-kaz-wingo/, 2012).

The Social Trippin 'event, which was held in London and Berlin for the first two meetings, brought experts in the field together, exchanging ideas and views on many topics related to aviation took place at Turkish Airlines's transfer center in Istanbul as the third meeting (http://www.socialtrippinistanbul.com/,2014).
BuzzFeed, one of Turkish Airlines' world's largest content producers, made a content study to announce direct flights to San Francisco in April 2015. Together with Bullseye Worldwide, Turkish Airlines created a brand account in BuzzFeed and published a content entitled "15 Reasons Istanbul and San Francisco Are Long-Lost Sister Cities", whichemphasised the common features and similarities of both cities. According to the information shared by the agency, this content received 30.000 views within 48 hours and the total performance of the campaign was measured as 102.292 views, 42.479 social readings and 100% positive comments and reactions (https://yucemozarslan.wordpress.com/tag/turk-hava-yollari/, 2015).

According to 2015 Skytrax data, Turkish Airlines, the best airline in Europe, prepared a social media campaign called "Delightful Stories" to provide a different experience to its customers. Each new journey is a new opportunity, a new discovery and experience with the idea of chasing after a new dream, writing that story, chasing the inspiring stories of people, chasing their dreams in different parts of the world, giving the chance to inspire millions of people in participating the contest. The experiences of the customers who turn their dreams into reality and write their own

stories are published on the site specially designed for that campaign. The story chosen by a jury is shared with followers to inspire the world as "delightful story" (http://www.delightfulstories.com/, 2018).

In 2015, Turkish Airlines collaborated with British director Rob Whitworth to create a unique video project based on Istanbul's historical and cultural beauty with a technique of "flow motion". In the project called "Flow Motion Istanbul Story" 295 hours of video was taken for the story of Istanbul with a different flow and the post production took 278 hours. Director Rob Whitworth, who previously directed promotional films of cities such as Dubai and Barcelona, brought modernism and nostalgia together from a different perspective by working on timelapse and hyperlapse techniques with accelerated images (http://www.dijitalajanslar.com/turk-hava-yollari-flow-motion-istanbul-hikayesi/, 2015).

As the official sponsor of Fenerbahce in 2015, Turkish Airlines prepared an extraordinary surprise for the team players before the Molde match and achieved great enthusiasm with "Reaching the Sky from the Ground ". Turkish Airlines airplane which departed from Sabiha Gokcen Airport to Norway in the morning for Molde match, changed its route shortly after departure and and went low flight towards Fenerbahce Sukru Saracoglu Sports Complex. The pilot made an announcement to the players to look down, where there was a big surprise; Fenerbahçe fans were carrying a giant uniform. This favour by Turkish Airlines was quite motivating for the player. This meaningful and prominent campaign of Turkish Airlines signed by Dekatlon Buzz, became popular in many other areas and shared on social media with # YerdeGökteYanındayız [We are with you in the ground and in the sky]hashtag (http://www.dijitalajanslar.com/turk-hava-yollarindan-fenerbahceye-dev-surpriz/, 2015).

Turkish Airlines held a contest 4 Seasons Balkans" in 2016 both in the Balkans and Turkey, which have similar cultures by using the hashtag #okadaryakınki [So close]. The details of the campaign were published on the website "4mevsimbalkanlar.com", with the travel stories of two winners.,. This experienced digital campaign conducted by Dekatlon Advertising Agency served a unique experience to the followers and the similarities and differences of the Balkan countries and Turkey, all the details and the most beautiful spots were presented through "4mevsimbalkanlar.com" web site(http://www.dijitalajanslar.com/turk-hava-yollari-4-mevsim-balkanlar-kis-kampanyasi/, 2016).

Turkish Airlines' sponsorship of the film Batman V Superman which is one of the most popular films of the year 2016 was announced on the day of the publication by the official Twitter account and this announcement about the film attracted great interest by his followers. In the special videos prepared for commercials, Turkish Airlines announced that Batman's flights to the city of Gotham and Superman's city Metropolis started, and that an advertising campaign was carried out successfully for digital marketing (http://sosyalmedya.co/turk-hava-yollari-batman-v-superman-filmine-ozel-reklam/, 2016).

Turkish Airlines is planning to use the technologies of Big Data and Internet of Things, in the new airport of Istanbul. At Istanbul's third airport, it is aimed to direct the customers towards the halls, dining areas, exit doors and the desired location by using the beacons that will interact with the customers' smart phones. In addition, customers will be able to track where their car is parked and where their children are by means of smart technology products (https://www.digitaldoughnut.com/articles/2017/march/how-airlines-are-using-big-data, 2017).

At the beginning of 2018, Turkish Airlines organized a travel software competition called "Travel Hackathon". Through this competition, the infrastructure of many projects that can be used in the future in the digital platform was tried to be created (http://www.dijitalyol.com/turkish-airlines-travel-hackathonunda-dereceye-giren-projeler-aciklandi/, 2018).

Turkish Airlines decided to apply a 15 percent discount on all domestic and international tickets, in case to be purchased via mobile application on 18-20 January 2018. With the application

that can anticipate the passengers from their previous flights and travel preferences, Turkish Airlines can provide passengers with different offers and customised preferences. Passengers who download the Turkish Airlines mobile app to their smart phones can purchase 15% off tickets for domestic and international tickets as well as purchase of tickets or miles, and can transfer miles to other members. The application was downloaded by one million four hundred thousand people in this process. Turkish Airlines General Manager Bilal Ekşi said in the campaign announced by Twitter "Time for mobile!" (Dünya Gazetesi, 2018). As a result of the campaign, a 5-fold turnover compared to the reference period and 2-fold application download was obtained. The campaign continued to expand after the campaign. With this campaign, more customers were aimed at downloading the mobile app and interacting with the application already (E-mail correspondence with Turkish Airlines Online Product Development Manager Murat Şahin on 14.05.2018).

Turkish Airlines has sent UBER promotional code of 50 Turkish Liras to the people who buy their air tickets in Istanbul and abroad. Passengers who wish to benefit from this campaign, which would be valid in 2018, should receive their tickets online and allow Turkish Airlines to receive e-mail campaign notifications when buying tickets (Milliyet, 2018).

Turkish Airlines utilizes its communication facilities by various promotional code applications and discount codes. The customer loyalty program has also defined action-based discounts to members. Thus, cross-segments and new acquisitions have been triggered. Another scope of promotional code applications is corporate image. For example, Turkish Airlines announced the HAPPY50 discount code to celebrate its 50th anniversary in Switzerland. In this type of campaigns, the primary aim is to say "We have been with you for 50 years" rather than increasing sales and to make it memorisable (E-mail correspondence with Turkish Airlines Online Product Development Manager Murat Şahin on 14.05.2018).

Table 2. Turkish Airlines' Prominent Digital Marketing Practices

WINGO promotional flight announcements
Socialtrippin
Delightful Stories, voyage/discovery stories
Flow Motion İstanbul
Travel Hackathon Contest
Campaigns and social media ads for mobile applications
Beacon system to be implemented at Istanbul 3rd Airport

The digital marketing practices of Turkish Airlines can be summarized as in the Table2. In the Turkish Airlines website and mobile application, dynamic changes can be made in contents, based on the travel phase of the customer. For example, a frequent flyer between Istanbul and Ankara can see Ankara at the top of the promotions when he searches for flights. In addition, different introductions are made according to the location and payment type of the user. These competencies enable Turkish Airlines to be able to do its part effectively in collaboration with other firms (E-mail correspondence with Turkish Airlines Online Product Development Manager Murat Şahin on 14.05.2018).

Pegasus Airlines
Pegasus Airlines leading the low cost airline sector in Turkey is an airline that follows the era closely and manages to reach the consumers with remarkable campaigns.

Pegasus organized a competition called "Barcelona with Pegasus" in 2013 in order to impress its customers with the digital campaign. The participants were connected to the www.pegasuslabarselona.com microsite via Twitter accounts and tweets were selected about 10 of the tweet alternatives about Barcelona. In the contest, where every participant who registered to the site had the right to a draw, the participants who had been sharing a lot had the opportunity to increase their chances to go to Barcelona. The tweets taken within the scope of the campaign were followed by #pegasuslabarselona label. During the campaign, the microsite of the competition was visited 187,596 times. A total of 41,820 Spanish tweets were placed in the campaign while 15,008 contestants participated (http://www.dijitalajanslar.com/pegasus-twitteri-ispanyolca-konusturdu/, 2013).

To achieve better results in national and international organic search, Pegasus Airlines started working with iProspect in 2014 and made SEO (Search Engine Optimization) on online sales in both Turkey and England. According to ComScore data, at most search engines Turkey ranks 1st in Europe along with flights which take place via the web. Pegasus Digital Marketing Manager Didem Namver states they found their communication activities through digital channels in a total of 36 countries along with Turkey, and adds: "*With the continuous growth of Pegasus's presence on the internet and the increased traffic and content of its websites www.flypgs.com, the number of keywords used has also increased significantly. For a company that has a high online sales target, it is not always easy for users to search all of the keywords they searched for. Pegasus also brought a different concept by the 'World's Most Beautiful Gift' campaign launched in 2011 and invited children to paint a holiday of their dreams. Users took pictures of the children's holiday drawing pictures of the campaign by uploading to the World's Most Beautiful Gift website. In the final stage of the competition, the Pegasus jury evaluated the paintings and the selected picture covered the newest plane of Pegasus. Also the name of the owner of the image was given to the relevant aircraft*" (http://www.dijitalajanslar.com/pegasus-ve-iprospect-seo-basarisi/, 2014).

In 2017, Pegasus organized a digital campaign called "Instagram Stories". The followers were asked to follow short videos published in the Stories section of their Instagram account to join the campaign. 8 different videos in 8-digit code of letters and numbers that make up the discounts were hidden in a short video that included images of Turkey's different tastes. Pegasus guests who get the password on Instagram Stories grabbed the opportunity to fly at a 20 percent discount.

Using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Foursquare, YouTube and Google+ accounts actively, Pegasus is one of the first brands to integrate digital developments into communication activities. Pegasus Airlines, which has been making serious investments for many years on its digital existence, has 1.2 million followers on Facebook, 228 thousand followers on Twitter and 79 thousand on Instagram. Pegasus mobile applications for 2.5 years in the App Store and Play Store have reached a total of 3 million downloads. As of July 2016, the share of mobile channel sales in total sales rose to 18.7 percent in domestic and 8.3 percent in international markets. In July 2015, these rates were 11.1 percent in the country and 4.4 percent abroad (https://www.campaigntr.com/pegasustan-instagram-stories-ile-kampanya/, 2017).

Pegasus attracted attention with the creative use of WeTransfer in the international advertising campaign. Instead of "WeTransfer", a file sharing platform, "We Also Transfer" slogan and flight experience photographs were used in the campaign. The concept and idea of WeTransfer's easy, fast and secure file transfer image is reflected to the user by Pegasus "affordable and accessible price" message. The creative idea and practice of the campaign is conducted by Isobar Turkey and the digital media planning is made by Vizeum (http://www.dijitalajanslar.com/pegasus-yaratici-mecra-kullanimi-we-also-transfer/, 2014). Pegasus is noted as one of the first brands using Instagram's application Hyperlapse in Turkey. Instagram, which managed to capture social media in a short time and accelerated the videos by up to 12 times, provided users with a time-lapse video application, Hyperlapse, which provided the followers with a different experience with videos shared as the trend advertising application of the era (http://www.dijitalajanslar.com/hyperlapse-ilk-kullanan-markalar/, 2014).

Table 3. Pegasus Airlines' Prominent Digital Marketing Practices

WeTransfer – We Also Transfer Ad
Hyperlapse
Instagram Stories
Social media ads and campaigns
Contests on social media

The digital marketing practices of Pegasus Airlines can be summarized at Table3. Using social media channels effectively in all communication activities, Pegasus focuses on two key issues in social media communication. The first is to inspire the guests by informing Pegasus of their campaigns and opportunities; the second is to analyze all the content shared related to Pegasus on social media and to try to solve the guests' problems. The company continues to invest on its digital presence.

Conslusion

The effective use of digital technologies in the aviation sector has provided a lot of benefits in terms of marketing, and also has a leverage effect in the sector in terms of enabling the enrichment of customer experiences.

It is inevitable to make the right digital strategy planning in order to provide competitive advantage in line with the changing customer profile and expectations and to ensure effective customer relationship management in today's dominating new media and communication technologies. It is important for the efficiency of the airline companies to invest in digital marketing applications, to follow the rapid digital transformation in the world and to calculate how much more value they can offer to the customer in the fastest way possible.

Necessary measures should be taken by taking into consideration the possibility of risks arising from the ability of the digital platform to share ideas and experiences freely. Since TV commercials, newspapers, magazines, billboards and other traditional marketing channels are more difficult to control they should professionally manage the digital platforms in terms of follow-up, content, services and feedback.

While the positive impact of the campaigns that attracted, amazed, entertained and involved the customer was highly contributing to the image and promotion of the brand, this is a direct reflection of the final target; sales. By the campaigns prepared with the help of digital technologies, social media accounts, web sites, viral advertisements, advergames, interactive virals and entertainment content, online blogs and e-mails, the companies are able to reach and be close to the customers with many channels.

In terms of the airline sector, the customer is very active in digital marketing with his mobile phone or computer, online ticket purchasing, additional sales, online check-in, boarding, flight, baggage delivery, hotel, car rental and many more services. In this context, the importance of digital marketing applications in the airline sector, where customers' preferences, travel habits, behaviors and many other data are stored by flight, mile, score collection cards or systems, and these data are evaluated through different customer relationship management programs and personal offers or promotions are increasing.

In line with this data, the airline companies meet the customer in a very good and friendly way from the corporate web pages, design the websites as user-friendly, facilitate the process of buying tickets, follow a transparent policy, prepare the campaigns that will surprise, amaze and entertain the customer. It will be useful to consider the added value of strategic decisions on issues such as providing products and services that can be met, good interpretation of passenger statistics, and utmost care in the management of the social media platform.

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