THE ROLE OF E-MARKETING TOOLS IN ATTRACTING PARTICIPANTS FOR SPECIAL EVENTS

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ABSTRACT

Electronic marketing tools have become crucial in the marketing communication world. The advancement of technology has resulted in the emergence of electronic marketing tools in various areas including special events. The implementation of e-marketing tools enables companies to attract event attendees for special events. This study focused on the role of e-marketing tools in attracting participants for special events. The purpose of this qualitative study is to construct meaning based on the experience of the respondents who used electronic marketing tools in order to have a better understanding on their perceptions toward the effectiveness of these tools in attracting participants to special events. Purposeful sampling was used to identify the respondents who have the experience of using e-marketing tools for attending special events. A total of two respondents were interviewed. The information gathered were analysed using the constant comparative method. The data resulted in six themes, which are The Types of E-marketing Tools for Special Events, The Roles of E-Marketing Tools for Special Events, The Types of Information Received through E-Marketing Tools for Special Events, The Importance of E-marketing Tools in Promoting Special Events, The Enhancement of Website Designs for Special Events and The Collaboration with other Digital Platforms for Special Events.

Keywords: E-marketing tools, special event, participant perception.

INTRODUCTION

Special events were initially defined as unique moment in time to celebrate with ritual and ceremony to satisfy specific needs (Goldblatt, 2011). Matthews (2015) mentioned that special events already exist in the early times like the ancient Olympics that began as a religious festival to remember the principal Greek god Zeus. While in the twenty-first century, a more concise description of special events is not only attending festive celebrations but including a series of gatherings, religious or secular, and formal or informal, like conferences, exhibitions, meetings, trade shows, events of various sizes, as well as public and private special events.

From the perspective of a host country, by holding various kind of special events that could attract a large number of visitors can boost the image of the destination. This is because special events are able to offer a unique marketing platform with different characteristics for different special events that differ in sizes with temporary or permanent infrastructure, different duration, and a variety of target audiences etc. The diversity of the

market offers opportunities for special event organisers to carry out the effective marketing communications strategies. For example, the current World Cup 2018 tournament in Russia is a special event that may result in the local business experiencing higher than usual profits.

With the advancement of technology nowadays, the internet becomes an ideal medium for the company to communicate with the customer. According to Paola Barbara and Francesca (2016), technological growth has altered the channels and ways of communication by creating new interactions style between firms and the public with the emergence of the internet. Thurman (2013) said that this generates the transformation of marketing tools from traditional marketing tools like television, radio, billboards and flyers to electronic marketing tools like the webpage.

Electronic marketing is a type of targeted marketing to introduce products or services and to generate the number of consumers with the assistance of websites through the internet (Salehi et al., 2012). On top of that, the rapid development of new electronic tools for marketing has been created by the development in electronic communication. Besides for business purposes, e-marketing tools have an impact in attracting participants for special events. It can be seen in the study of Radikonyanaet et al. (2015) showing that special event organisers were beginning to use e-marketing tools in communicating with the event attendees of mega sport events like the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, Germany 2006 FIFA Soccer World Cup and Beijing 2008 Summer Olympic Games since 2012. The reasons these mega events utilise the e-marketing channels is because these tools are able to reach wide and different segments of the sports target market.

The purpose of this research is to determine the role of e-marketing tools and the ways of implementation in attracting participants for special events. The research questions are:

1. Which e-marketing tools do special events participants use?
2. What type of information do special events participants prefer to receive through e-marketing tools?
3. How do e-marketing tools help to attract participants to special events?

However, there are limitations to study as secondary data were difficult to come by. Thus, this became a constraint for this study as the literature is limited.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, related studies on e-marketing tools and its role in attracting participants for special events are discussed. This section is divided into three subtopics. The first section describes the importance of e-marketing, challenges of e-marketing and e-marketing in events. The next section discusses about the role of e-marketing tools and the types of e-marketing tools. Lastly, the impact of e-marketing tools on participants of special events are elaborated.

E-Marketing for Events

E-marketing for events is an area that needs to be studied because of its potential impact in securing a wider audience as compared to conventional marketing.

Importance of E-Marketing

The growth of personal computing and internet access has rapidly changed the patterns of work, leisure, and access to information through media exposure across large parts of the world. Similarly, in today's business climate, e-marketing has utilised information technology for marketing activities (Strauss & Raymond, 2016). It includes the procedures of creating, exchanging, delivering, communicating offerings with value for customers, partners, clients and society at large. Stokes (2013) stated that generating and satisfying demands are the basics of marketing. While with the strength of the internet, digital marketing is able to stimulate and meet this demand in new and creative ways. A more simple way to explain e-marketing is applying information technology into traditional marketing.

According to Kieżel and Wiechoczek (2014), organisations increasingly utilise the internet to gain information about customers' demands or operating conditions, in addition to generate, to communicate and to deliver value for customers. Issues such as branding, public relations, direct marketing, advertising, personal selling and information seeking are considered as an effort to determine digital marketing and its potential involvement to the marketing practice (Harridge-March, 2014). This results in information technology offering a significant medium with multiple marketing strategies for the customer to connect with the brand and with each other.

Challenges of E-Marketing

However, there are some difficulties and challenges faced by businesses which conduct marketing strategies through the internet. Karjaluoto, Mustonen and Ulkuniemi (2015) argue that studies show that because of different norms of customer communication, applications of e-marketing could not be able to satisfy every customer's communication style and this causes some negative side effects for the firm. For instance, consumers felt their confidentiality is being threatened while having open discussions in social media. They are afraid of their personal information and the content of the conversation will be exposed to a third party who was in the same platform. There are some companies who are not daring enough to take the initial steps toward public communication with the reason of the threat of losing the competitive advantage as the company is scared of disclosing the marketing or operation tactics on the internet as it can easily be imitated and defeated by competitors. Besides that, some consumers perceived making transactions through online result in privacy loss as their personal information may be invaded by a hacker. According to Mahajan (2015) the users perceived customer services provided via online operating system as impersonal. This is because the business website will only share information that customers normally will ask like Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). This causes consumers to feel the lack of interaction with just searching for the solutions that were already set in the system and there are some problems that could not be solved instantly. Therefore, it is crucial for the company to distinguish their marketing communication by selecting a suitable marketing channel which is either digital or traditional. The same goes for the event industry as there are a number of event organisers who choose to apply the internet into marketing plans in order to raise the awareness of the event and to promote attendance.

E-Marketing in Special Events

Special events are now becoming popular around the world. This is because people get attracted to its unique characteristics like its social impact, entertainment, activities and the atmosphere of the event. This can be observed in the study of Xie and Sinwald (2016) that indicated that special events are current way to offer leisure opportunities for the public. At the same time, special events will help to attract the visitation of tourists and boost the economy of a country. From the perspective of events, event organisers are able to implement a series of e-marketing strategies to reach larger audiences within the shortest period. According to Alonso-Dos-Santos, Calabuig-Moreno and Montoro-Ríos (2016), during 1991 the first sports event already started to use the internet in communicating and transacting with the public and event supporters. In addition, Vila-Lo´pez and Rodrı´guez-Molina (2013) argue that MTV Spain which is a famous television music channel owned by MTV Networks Europe, as the organiser of the annual MTV Winter Festival used the internet for diverse promotional campaigns through a variety of interactive platforms with participants such as Facebook, Desface by the face and reporter@digital, etc. The innovative promotions taken by MTV Spain had attracted up to 35,000 audiences to watch the channel via live broadcast. Initially, it can be seen that the event organizer was only using the internet channel to build the relationship with the participants. When this came to the twenty-first century, event businesses began to incorporate information technology into their marketing practices in order to promote their events and to draw the interest of clients and the public.

E-Marketing Tools

E-marking tools play an important part in promoting information of and about events. The roles of e-marketing tools and its types are described below.

Roles of E-Marketing Tools

Digital technology provides a platform for the usage of e-marketing tools and this has increased in recent years. According to Taiminen and Karjaluoto (2015), the main purpose of having a digital channel for the businesses is to raise sales, while other objectives are improving customer service, easing communication and facilitating recruitment. In addition, the role of the internet channel seems to have a positive impact on customer behaviours such as consumers are able to explore the web any time, any place and anywhere. Moreover, e-marketing tools are able to provide convenience for digital consumers to conduct product research, social networking and categorise the product information received by filtering out the relevant items and excluding unwanted commercial messages (Ryan, 2017). On top of that, there are different types of e-marketing channels that have been included in current business promotion plan. As Kieżel and Wiechoczek (2014) suggested that businesses operating in various divisions are encouraged to manage marketing activity in order to generate customer engagement. This can be achieved effectively by applying e-marketing tools such as social media, websites, e-mails, chats, blogs, forums, virtual events, podcasts, multi-user gaming, content communities and life streams, etc.

Types of E-Marketing Tools

One of the most influential digital channels as mentioned above is social media. By not spending extra expenses on conventional media like radio, television and print, social media as a global digital channel has assisted communities and businesses to convey the message in order to reach the audience widely. Examples of social media include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and etc. This social media revolution has given people around the world including Malaysia, the most powerful voice they ever had. According to Statista (n.d.b) stated that are around 13.59 million Malaysia social media users in 2017 and this will increase for the coming years. In the business context, social media provides a platform for users to express their opinion towards the product. For instance, Goh, Heng and Lin (2013) indicated that user-generated content has added more company value compared to firm-created content in the study of impact of social media on firm profits. Thus, by viewing the feedback generated from online consumers, customers are able to make comparisons and contrast products and services before they purchase it.

During the past few years, other digital tools like marketing websites have been used as a marketing strategy in business in order to raise brand awareness. Marketing website is a website that interacts with consumers within the shorten distance to meet the marketing results (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). A website not only provides the professional look and is physically attractive; it must also be easy to access and is useful. For example, Samsung operates its marketing website in a way that quickly direct customers to the specific products and detailed information like product price, locations, and links for online and local store retailers needed to make a buying decision. What we can see is that Samsung's website is not all that flashy, but it gets customers quickly and effectively to all the product information they are seeking. Aside from businesses, e-marketing channels also influence the number of participants in special events.

Impact of E-Marketing Tools on Participants of Special Events

The internet usage and its impact continue to grow steadily. The online marketing environment provides a platform for the event companies to engage customers in the ways of persuading, attracting and converting (Goldblatt, 2011). In one way or another, many event companies have now moved online. According to Hracs, Seman and Virani (2016), the live music industry has been associated with large multinational corporations like the marketing websites of Live Nation and the Anschutz Entertainment Group (AEG) which provides promotion, venue management and ticketing services in the internet era. Moreover, another website like Eventbrite acts as an online event management system that helps event organizers with a series of services to promote events. On top of that, it also allows users to view event listings with details, purchase tickets, register for events and even share the interested event via social media. This shows that marketing websites are not only convenient for both parties but also facilitates customer relationship. Besides that, it is also changing the attendees purchasing behaviour whereby they no longer need to spend time queuing at the ticket counter to buy tickets.

Online marketing tools are considered as a powerful method to influence the attendance of a special event. Based on the data shown by Eventbrite (2013), every time a user shares upcoming festivals or conventions information on Facebook, it gained around $4.15 additional ticket sales in return to the event organiser and generated 15 views visit to

the event page. Organisers who encourage participants to share their interested special event in the social platform will easily attract or get their friends to join the event. Another study by Foley and Hunt (2013) stated that the immersive experience of Formula One spectators has significantly increased with the combination of greater information availability whereby social media channels allow interaction and flexible handheld devices. By posting and interacting the content about the special event via online, it will be able to transform the fans' experience and increase options for fans with an internet connection or smartphone. Consequently, the explosion of marketing activities on the web through online platforms has significant impact for the participants of special events. It does not only offer a medium for the special event company to build active engagement with participants but it also changes their behaviour and raises the excitement towards the special events.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative methodology was applied in this research. Based on Merriam and Tisdell (2016), qualitative research focuses on constructing meaning in contexts in order to gain an understanding of the underlying experiences, reasons and opinions of the participants. There are four main characteristics of qualitative research, which include the researcher as primary instrument, focus on meaning and understanding, an inductive process and rich description.

Research Design

For this research, phenomenology was the primary design as the experience of the participants for special events was the primary data source. According to Moustaka (1994, p. 13), "The phenomenological approach involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience." For those who have used the e-marketing tools, an in-depth phenomenological study has the ability to examine the scope of the participant's preference for digitals tools and experience in using the tools. It is important to know the perceptions and experiences of the respondents in using the e-marketing tools which may directly impact attendance at special events. Primary and secondary data were used for this study. Primary data were gathered directly through interviews with participants. Secondary data were gathered from other sources such as different websites and other printed documents.

Context of Study

This study was conducted by interviewing respondents in the Klang Valley area. There were two respondents interviewed for this study. Both of the respondents are from year three and year four students in public universities.

Sample

The type of sampling applied in this qualitative research was purposeful sampling. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) highlighted that purposeful sampling is a manner of obtaining information through participants who have experienced the phenomenon that is being

investigated. The reasons of choosing the two respondents in this study were mainly because they have attended special events like music festivals, concerts, talks and workshops and have used the e-marketing tools like social media and website for obtaining event information frequently. The participants who were directly involved as users of the digital tools and attended special events were able to provide their views and experiences in a meaningful way.

Data Collection Procedures

A casual conversation with five persons was conveyed through Facebook to determine the sample that is suitable for the study. Once the respondents that fit the characteristics of the sample were determined, the process of asking permission for interviewing sessions with the selected two respondents through Facebook took place. In order to have a better understanding, the purpose of the study was briefly explained to the respondents. After gaining the permission from the two respondents, appointments for the interview sessions were made through email with the availability of the respondents and the place to meet in the Klang Valley. Informed consent form was given to the respondent before the interview session began. Respondents were asked to read the details of the consent form and to sign it upon having agreed with the terms and conditions of the interview. Respondents were assured that their identity will not be disclosed and all the information provided is confidential and used only for academic purposes. The transcripts were sent to all of the respondents for checking the accuracy of the information obtained.

Data Analysis Procedures

The information given by respondents during the interview session was transcribed by the researcher verbatim. The longest transcript is four pages while the shortest transcript is two pages. Before conducting the interview with the second respondent, data analysis was conducted with the first transcript. The information was coded and reduced. The constant comparative was used as pointed out by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2013) that this process allows the data to be constantly compared and categorised into single or multiple dimensions until the category is saturated. After analysing the first transcript, patterns of the data could be identified and it is will be easier for coding the following interview session. The process of data analysis described above was repeated for the following transcripts. According to Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2013), the authors highlighted that the number of times of the code appears and its consistency could generate a pattern. The pattern indicates that the information from the respondent is important.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the interviews resulted in the following six main themes with sub-themes as shown in Table 1. Brief explanations and discussions of the results are provided in the following paragraphs.

Table 1: Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Sub-themes
1. The Types of E-marketing Tools for Special Events	a. Popular social media b. Formal communication
2. The Roles of E-marketing Tools for Special Events	a. Event communication b. Event information
3. The Types of Information received through E-Marketing Tools for Special Events	a. General event information b. Specific event information
4. The Importance of E-Marketing Tools in Promoting Special Events	a. Preferred e-marketing tools b. Functions of preferred e-marketing tools
5. The Enhancement of Website Designs for Special Events	a. Attractiveness of website features b. Sufficient information of the event
6. The Collaboration with other Digital Platforms for Special Events	a. Cooperate with famous social media b. Promote with electronic publications

The Types of E-marketing Tools for Special Events

The respondents identified and described different types of e-marketing tools which they think are useful for special events. The e-marketing tools that the respondents perceived as useful are based on the frequency of their usage. The results show that social media is the type of digital tools that the respondents considered as useful. Social media can be categorised into popular social media and formal social media.

Popular Social Media

Among the type of social media that the respondents mentioned, Facebook and Instagram are the digital tools that they perceived as popular. One respondent said, "I think social network is useful, for example like Facebook and Instagram" (R1). Both of the respondents mentioned that Facebook and Instagram are useful in conveying information for special events. Among the two social media, both of them perceived that the most useful popular is Facebook. According to a respondent, "The most useful one I think is Facebook because it is depends on the frequency that I use for the apps. So for me, Facebook is the most frequent one" (R2). From that, Facebook can be implied as the popular tool that people commonly use. Similarly, another respondent said, "I think is Facebook, because every day I will search for the Facebook, there is a page to share the event there, then I will simply click going if I am interested with" (R1).

Formal Communication

Besides popular social media, formal communication channels can be used. The respondents believe that the event company should deliver their message in a formal way via email. According to a respondent, "Email is useful just because it can be connected with the event organizer in person so that other people not able to see it" (R2). As Karjaluoto, Mustonen and Ulkuniemi (2015) mentioned, digital marketing is unable to fulfil every person's communication preferences whereby people are afraid that their personal information might

be exposed to a third party. Based on that, emails could be a digital marketing tool to solve the problem. Special event participants could email the event company directly instead of posting the conversation content on the open discussion platform. Thus, the user may feel more secured to share their personal information through email where the company will be able to assist with their inquiry directly.

The Roles of E-marketing Tools for Special Events

The respondents described the roles of e-marketing tools as a communication media because it facilitates the sharing of information pertinent to special events.

Event Communication

Generally, social media is able to assist the special event participants to communicate with the person in charge of the event based on several aspects. First, the respondent pointed out that popular e-marketing tools are necessary for communication in order to connect with the participants going to an event. As one respondent said, "Because nowadays people always use social network, we can't live without it, even my father also using it. If the company organising some event using the tools in promoting their event, I think it is very useful because the people are using the social network to connect with each other" (R1). This respondent further clarified, "Because people are using the social network too frequently, so if I have anything want to ask, they will reply me within seconds" (R1). The next aspect is that everyone is able to browse the internet anytime and anywhere nowadays as communication through social media has become more convenient. As Ryan (2017) mentioned, digital marketing channels are offering convenience for the users from its various function. This can be seen from the point of view that the respondent who said, "Even though I'm seldom go outside, so I can get all the news and information all through the tools" (R2).

Event Information

Besides event communication, the respondents perceived social media as useful because it is able to help them get the event information. Increasingly e-marketing tools users will tend to look for the event information which is relevant and categorised into different types of events for them. According to one respondent, "Let's say I'm interested with music, so I search in the column or the page of event, if I clicked in, they will suggested other related or links with this category music" (R1). Other than that, with the technology advancement, content of the event can be created, shared and published quickly and easily. Thus, the special event participants will be able to obtain the latest event information and this could generate their interest towards the event. As another respondent said, "If the event can be promoting thorough the social media that means they are the trendy event, so I will be more interested searching for the event that promoting through the social media" (R2).

The Types of Information received through E-Marketing Tools for Special Events

In special event contexts, participants prefer to receive almost all information about the event via digital channels. Based on the data analysis there are two types of information that the participants prefer to receive which are general event information and specific event information.

General Event Information

Basically, participants would like to obtain common information for special events. From the respondent's point of view, "The basic information such as the time, venue, and the activity included in the event will be included in the website" (R2). The official event website or social media page provided with the general event details could lead to a brief understanding for participants about the special event. Correspondingly, another respondent stated the same aspect, "I will receive the tittle of the event, time and venue" (R1).

Specific Event Information

Besides the common event information, more specific event information should be provided in order to give the participants a better understanding about the event. The data show that price is the significant aspect whereby all of the respondents' purchasing decisions are dependent on their financial ability. According to the two respondents, "For me, the most attraction for me is to know the price of the event" (R1) and "I will see the price, depend on whether it is worth for me to join the event, if too expensive, might not be able to afford" (R2). Goh, Heng and Lin (2013) stated that user-generated content can create value for the company. Consequently, it is important to show the comments from the others which may probably allow the participants to think that the information is reliable since it was expressed based on their experience. As one respondent said, "I will see the review from the others, see whether there have the good or bad comment to the event, then I will proceed to join this or not, because normally organizer will seldom provide the review and rating like how many star" (R2).

The Importance of E-Marketing Tools in Promoting Special Events

There are many ways special event organisers can attract the interest of participants. By using the preferred e-marketing tools, this would aid the special event organisers in promoting their events.

Preferred E-Marketing Tools

In the 21st century, the invention of technology causes the emergence of different types of digital marketing channels in the market. As mentioned in the previous section, Eventbrite is known as an online event management system that helps the event company to organise marketing activities. This same e-marketing tool was suggested by a respondent who said, "Apps like Eventbrite, I have once install the apps, it's free so people willing to install it" (R1). From the respondent's point of view, the next preferred e-marketing tools for

advertising special events is based on popular social media such as Facebook. Based on the statistic reported by Statista (n.d.a), Facebook is the famous social media all around the world and the number of Facebook users is estimated to increase from 11.8million in 2017 to 12.7 million in the next year. Another respondent said, "I think it depends on the number of the user browse the website, like in China will be the Weibo, in Malaysia, I think is the most well-known should be Facebook" (R1).

Functions of Preferred E-Marketing Tools

Preferred e-marketing tools that were mentioned by the respondents have significant impact promoting special event. The digital marketing channels are convenient for the respondents to gain the related and interested event information. For instance, one respondent highlighted that Eventbrite is useful and convenient for the participants to search for the current event, "There has categorized all the type of event that interested like music, yoga, sports or culture something like that" (R1). Special event participants are able to gain more event information with Facebook as another respondent said, "Facebook can be like more options like people can search, read and comment the event compared to Instagram, it will also link to the event page, then you can view the event details from the page" (R2). The respondent also mentioned that "Facebook also got other features like most of your friend is interested in that event then the information will be popped out in your newsfeed, it will share to the other friend" (R2). Indirectly, the Facebook users became a promotion tool that could be able to influence the interest of large number special events participants as referred to in the Social Commerce Report (2013).

The Enhancement of Website Designs for Special Events

Kotler and Armstrong (2014) mentioned that marketing website is crucial for interacting with its users. Thus, the website design should be enhanced in a creative and systematic way in order to grab the participant's attention for special events.

Attractiveness of Website Features

Website features should be designed in a creative way to grab the attention of users for special events. As both of the respondents suggested, "Sometimes, they maybe can included some video from the past event so that people will be more understand what is the activities" (R2) and "Biggest improvement you can do is you have to create your website more special like picture" (R1). The respondents think that enhancing the visual display of the event website could actually give a quick picture of the special event for participants.

Sufficient Information of the Event

Sometimes, the participants will experience difficulty in looking for the information about the event on the website. The respondents believe that not all the event companies have provided sufficient information based on their experience. A respondent said, "I will want to know the sequence like some of them will say the time is from 8pm to 10pm, but I need to know between 8.30pm-9pm" (R1). From that, the schedule with the list of activities should

be shown instead of just stated the beginning time till ending time. Moreover, some extra notice or reminder that display on event page could actually be an adding point for the special event. One respondent who experienced a fun run event before said, "The event should provide the map, things allow and not allowed to bring, any food stall provided, and also the car park fees" (R2). This shows that special event organisers should be concerned about the needs of the participants.

The Collaboration with other Digital Platforms for Special Events

Instead of just promoting at their own platform, the event company could collaborate with other online marketing channels. This can be one of the marketing strategies for the event organisation to attract a larger number of audiences from another e-marketing platform. Collaboration with other digital platforms may provide mutual benefits to both parties.

Cooperate with Famous Social Media

As mentioned, Facebook is known as the popular social media. Other than creating their own Facebook page for the event, one respondent suggested that the organiser can build promotion ads on Facebook to generate greater awareness about the event. One respondent provided the recommendation, "I think they should put more efforts in drawing people for example you can collaborate with Facebook, because Facebook have function that can show your event in their ads" (R1). In addition, the respondents have recommended to cooperate with the famous Facebook page that mainly in helping the event companies to promote the event in their page. There were some examples of the Facebook pages given by the respondents, "Like Viral Cham, Goody.com, they will promoting the event" (R2) and "The name is Hello KL Cool Event, the admin will share whatever event happen in Kl within a month" (R1).

Promote with Electronic Publications

Marketing special events through electronic publications like online newspaper and online magazines will be able to draw the attention of readers. One respondent highlighted, "If you're the organizer, you have to link with some digital publications for example like Timeout Kl or whatever" (R1). By inviting media to publish the special event on digital publications, this could be a great way for the event company to get the positive public relations. On top of that, the rating or review provided by the media based on their understanding and experience of the special event can be considered as convincing for the participants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many e-marketing tools that are emerging in the market with the development of technology. It may be considered crucial for special events organisers to select the appropriate digital platform to draw the event attendees in the future. Some special event organisers may choose to promote their special events in certain digital platforms which are not familiar to participants. This implies that the company may lose its opportunity to grab

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the awareness of special events participants from a particular digital platform with major users. Hence, a proper e-marketing channel like Facebook can be chosen in order to attract the maximum crowd.

Normally, event participants may only have one chance to experience the special event. The features of the event website are important to attract and sustain the interest of the participants for special events. The display of special event information can be designed to showcase the intangible aspects for raising the excitement of the event attendees. For instance, an interesting and creative promotional video with all the general and specific details can provide the participants information for their decision making to either attend or not to attend the special event.

CONCLUSION

This study focused on the role of e-marketing tools in attracting participants for special events. It is important to design and implement proper marketing strategies to target the specific audience towards the special events. A variety of e-marketing channels have appeared in the market. This provides the market with more options for choosing the platforms that they want to use. Hence, the role and type of e-marketing tools that the participants expect for communication and interaction need to be carefully constructed. In addition, people are more knowledgeable and becoming more demanding on receiving specific information. It is important that special event attendees are able to access the event information they need, rather than what special event organisers assume they need.

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