OPEN
UNIVERSITY OF
CYPRUS
www.ouc.ac.cy

FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

«MASTER IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION »

MASTER THESIS

**E-Marketing Plan of Travel Agencies in 21st Century:
A Case Study of Let's Go Tours**

Anna Panayiotou

**SUPERVISOR
Dr. Marios Theodosiou**

May 2017

Open University of Cyprus

Faculty of Economics and Management

Graduate Program
«Business Administration (MBA) »

Master Thesis

**E-Marketing Plan of Travel Agencies in 21st Century:
A Case Study of Let's Go Tours**

Anna Panayiotou

**Supervisor
Dr. Marios Theodosiou**

May 2017

Open University of Cyprus

Faculty of Economics and Management

Graduate Program
«Business Administration (MBA) »

Master Thesis

E-Marketing Plan of Travel Agencies in 21st Century:
A Case Study of Let's Go Tours

Anna Panayiotou

Supervisor
Dr. Marios Theodosiou

This master thesis is submitted for the partial fulfillment of the Master's Degree
«Business Administration (MBA)»
Faculty of Economics and Management
Open University of Cyprus

May 2017

Περίληψη

Σε ένα συνεχώς μεταβαλλόμενο περιβάλλον, φαίνεται ότι οι τεχνολογικές εξελίξεις δεν άφησαν ανεπηρέαστη ούτε την τουριστική βιομηχανία. Ο παραδοσιακός τρόπος λειτουργίας των ταξιδιωτικών πρακτορείων μετακυλύει στην ανάγκη εφαρμογής διαδικτυακών υποδομών και έτσι πολλές επιχειρήσεις καλούνται να ακολουθήσουν τις τάσεις της εποχής ή να εγκαταλείψουν την αγορά. Παράλληλα με την εξέλιξη αυτή, ο εκσυγχρονισμός των ηλεκτρονικών μέσων και η διάχυση της πληροφορίας οδηγούν στην ταξιδιωτική διευθέτηση μέσω ατομικών ηλεκτρονικών συναλλαγών, θέτοντας το ρόλο των ταξιδιωτικών πρακτορείων στο περιθώριο.

Μια χώρα όπως η Κύπρος, της οποίας η οικονομία βασίζεται κυρίως στο τουριστικό προϊόν, δεν μπορεί παρά να υιοθετήσει την παγκόσμια τάση. Η άνοδος του τουρισμού από έτος σε έτος, αποτελεί σημαντικό παράγοντα για εμπλουτισμό των υπηρεσιών των ταξιδιωτικών γραφείων καθιστώντας έτσι σημαντική τη φυσική τους παρουσία. Το πρόβλημα ωστόσο δεν είναι υπαρξιακό αλλά εξελικτικό και κυρίως ως προς τον τρόπο μετάδοσης της προστιθέμενης αξίας που προσφέρουν από τους προμηθευτές τουριστικών προϊόντων στους τελικούς χρήστες.

Η παρούσα μεταπτυχιακή διατριβή αναδεικνύει τις προκλήσεις που καλούνται να αντιμετωπίσουν τα ταξιδιωτικά πρακτορεία τον 21ο αιώνα και παρουσιάζει ένα ολοκληρωμένο διαδικτυακό σχέδιο μάρκετινγκ προς υιοθέτηση για μια από τις μεγαλύτερες ταξιδιωτικές εταιρείες του νησιού, την Let's Go Tours. Η εταιρεία αν και απολαμβάνει μεγάλο μερίδιο της Κυπριακής αγοράς, δεν έχει αναπτύξει μέχρι στιγμής ικανοποιητικά διαδικτυακά μέσα για τη διατήρηση της στο μακροπρόθεσμο ορίζοντα.

Έτσι, τα πορίσματα της μελέτης, είναι πρωτίστης σημασίας τόσο για τη διερεύνηση τρόπων ένταξης των τεχνολογικών μέσων σε επιχειρήσεις που απασχολούνται με υπηρεσίες τουρισμού αλλά και για την ίδια την εταιρεία που εξετάζεται, καθώς η Διοίκηση της συμμετείχε ζωτικά στην διεξαγωγή της παρούσας διατριβής.

Summary

In a constantly changing environment, technological progress did not leave the tourism industry unaffected. The traditional business of travel agencies changed, creating a need to develop online infrastructure. As a result, many businesses are forced to follow the new trends or abandon the market. Alongside this evolution, the improvement of online means and information gathering and sharing, led to self-booking travel arrangements by individuals, marginalizing the role of travel agencies.

A country like Cyprus, whose economy heavily relies on tourism, has no other option than to adopt the global trend. The growth of Tourism over the years is an important factor in order to enrich the services of travel agencies, giving at the same time a number of reasons for keeping their physical presence. However, the problem is not the existence of travel agencies but their evolution, mainly regarding the transmission of the added value they offer from tourism suppliers to end users.

The current master thesis highlights the challenges that travel agencies face in the 21st century and presents a comprehensive online marketing plan, for one of the largest travel agencies of the island, called *Let's Go Tours*. Although the company enjoys a high percentage of the Cyprus market share, it has not developed, as yet, a satisfactory online presence to maintain its competitive character in the long term.

The findings of the thesis are important in order to explore ways of integrating technological tools within companies related to tourism. For the examined travel agency is also important, given that its management team participated vigorously in achieving the current research.

Acknowledgements

~ Στους γονείς μου ~

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

ACTA = Association of Cyprus Travel Agents

API = Application Programming Interface

B2B = Business to Business

B2C = Business to Customer

CTO = Cyprus Tourism Organization

ICT = Information and Communication Technology

CMS = Customer Management System

CPM = Cost Per Thousand

CRM = Customer Relationship Management

eWOM = Electronic Word of Mouth

OCECPR = Office of Electronic Communications and Postal Regulations

OTA = Online Travel Agency

ROI = Return on Investment

MICE = Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions

IATA = International Air Transport Association

IT = Information Technology

IT Fare = Inclusive Tour Fare

WOM = Word of Mouth

Chapter 1
Introduction

The impact of e-marketing has a tremendous effect on all types of businesses of the 21st century, influencing both their current and future performance (Deng et al., 2000). This master thesis presents the challenges that the tourism industry is facing and specifically travel agencies, which are forced to move from physical to online infrastructure. In this Chapter, information related to the current research is presented in more detail, such as the research scope, methodology used and rational for investigating travel agencies' electronic marketing.

1.1 Background

Investigating and analyzing e-marketing strategies for travel agencies is of great importance as tourism is one of the factors that keeps Cyprus economy in a relatively good financial position, enough to overcome the financial crisis of 2008. The country is a very attractive tourist destination, receiving more than €2.363,4 million and accommodating more than 3.186.531 visitors in the last calendar year (Cyprus Statistical Service, 3/4/2017), providing the ground for travel agencies' growth.

Even though the past few years the tourism industry has suffered from terrorism fear, fortunately for the existing travel agencies the growth of tourism kept rising. Worldwide travels currently reach three billion per year keeping global economy standing (Loureiro, 2016). This is due to the growth of living standards in most of the countries but also to the favorable conditions created by technology progress. In addition, the remarkable improvement of transport means combined with new establishments enriched the conditions to host travelers from all around the world.

Furthermore, the systematic set up of the necessary infrastructure for tourism, especially airlines and cruise lines with low cost and frequent correspondences, has

given the opportunity to a large part of the population of developed societies to perform trips within and outside the borders of their country.

Without a doubt, the evolution of technology gradually brought awareness of the planet's beauties giving the chance to consumers to book their tickets online avoiding any intermediaries. As a consequence, travel agencies assumed a secondary role witnessing their sales and profits fall. Self-reservations through online means are not only accessible, but also the new trend that many travelers choose to organize their vacations. It is not surprising that the increase of communication speed and thereby increased customer power, has led to substantial changes to business at all parts of the supply chain (Bigne et al., 2008).

As a result, travel agencies that used to be successful in organizing traveler's trips, are driven to confront the upcoming online nature of the industry. Consequently, internet and information sharing help tourism growth, but at the same time decrease travel agencies' work if not using internet. This means that technology has a positive impact on tourism and a negative impact on traditional travel agencies.

1.2 Research Scope

The scope of the specific thesis, is the analysis of the strategy that a travel agency may adopt in the 21st century to confront direct individual's bookings, through a proposed e-marketing plan. Technological advances and online access marginalize travel agencies so much that many of them were pushed out of the market (Law et al., 2015). Based on a real case study, this research examines possible online strategies that a travel agency may develop to overcome the industry's difficulties. The company examined is called Let's Go Tours and is one of the largest travel agencies in Cyprus.

1.3 Research Question

The main question that this thesis attempts to answer is:
"Is it possible for travel agencies, being the intermediaries between travelers and suppliers, to remain in business in a technologically changing environment, given that the other two groups are having direct communication?"

Travel agencies usually get paid for the services provided either by charging a fee to their customers or by receiving a commission from the suppliers. This is a typical two-sided market, facilitating trade and operation of travel service providers to passengers and visitors (Bilotkach et al., 2014). However, with the use of online means, suppliers do not need any representatives and establish their own websites. As a consequence, customers also do not need travel agencies to book their travels and reach suppliers' websites simply with the use of internet and a credit card. Taking into consideration the above, can travel agencies survive in the 21st century?

1.4 Research Approach

The research employs a qualitative and a quantitative approach because it prescribes the company's perspective to remain in business and avoid any going concern issues. This will be analyzed in monetary terms, such as the budget needed to meet relevant changes, as well as in terms of different strategy techniques, related to e-marketing mix.

Understanding the current position of the company, from a marketing and e-marketing angle, it is vital to reveal new practices and strategy. However, before the examination of the above, a situation analysis will be presented to evaluate the micro and macro environment of the company. For the macro-environment PESTEL analysis will be used, whereas the SWOT analysis is recommended in order to examine the internal and external environment of the company.

Based on the case study and academic findings, other models will be used as well, in order to present a more complete picture of the e-marketing strategy proposed. Stressing the changing environment of tourism industry, the use of deep theoretical analyses will contribute to the overall aim of the research and answer the research question more adequately.

1.5 Research Methodology

The thesis approach was based on evidence from primary and secondary data and more specifically:

a) Primary data: Information about the current position and situation analysis of the company was collected by using the following methods:

1. Formal interview with the company's management. Let's Go Tours management team were very keen on spending their time and energy, sharing inside information and discussing the company's difficulties. The specific method was chosen because it is a personal form of research and open-ended questions enabling the collection of in-depth information. Even if this method was time consuming, information collected was detailed and clarification of answers was possible through discussion. It can be assumed that by exploring the management's views, experiences and prospects, a better e-marketing plan was developed.

2. Structured, non-participant direct observation of the company's procedures and personnel operations when providing customer service. This approach provided reliable information for the way that the company's work is carried out and facilitated receipt of inside view of reality. Also, by studying the above and observing personnel without any interaction or intervention to their duties, the current position and processes of the company were more easily understood. Also, because the operations of the travel agency are dynamic, due to the different customer preferences emerged on an everyday basis, the use of structured viewpoints to examine the relationship between personnel and customers appeared to be invaluable.

Findings of primary data are presented in Chapter 3.

b) Secondary data: This was achieved by studying and examining available literature review, regarding the changing environment of tourism industry and different e-marketing strategies and trends. Academic books, journals and other types of publications were used in order to develop the basis for the e-marketing plan proposal. In this way, orientation to a greater volume of knowledge about the topic was succeeded.

Findings of secondary data are presented in Chapters 2 and 4.

1.6 Research Importance and Benefits

Examining the strategy that a company is called to follow due to online threats is a unique experience. With this thesis, the research contributes to the current issues that many companies may face in Cyprus, inside and outside the analyzed industry. Focusing on the tourism field though, it is believed that travel agencies will have the opportunity to gain ideas of how to react to self-bookings, a problem that drives them in the margin.

It is essential to mention that the outcome of this thesis will be presented to the management team of the company, who will evaluate the proposal extracted from the research. The direct participation and involvement of Let's Go Tours Directors is expected during and after the research.

1.7 Research Limitations

A major drawback that the specific research has is the lack of evidence on Cypriot citizens and their preference for using online travel reservations on their own, categorized by age, sex, city of origin and other groups. Such data would verify the urgency of establishing the e-marketing plan proposed and would classify travelers according to their age, gender, occupation and other categories. In addition, another limitation is considered to be related to the other travel agencies in Cyprus. Competitors' planning to overcome the difficulties that the industry is facing is crucial to design an appropriate e-marketing plan.

Finally, testing the proposed e-marketing plan would be useful to evaluate customers' responsiveness. Such a suggestion would confirm the company's preservation in business and the answer to the research question of this thesis. This could be achieved through questionnaires asking the opinion of the local citizens for the proposed plan or actually run the plan online and evaluate web analytics.

Further research is recommended not only to address the above limitations, but also to investigate the new trends of the industry and the choices that travelers have in accordance to the planning and reservation of their travels. Technology evolution cannot ever be fully explored resulting possible and unexpected changes to business operations.

Chapter 2
Tourism and Travel Agencies
In The 21ˢᵗ Century

This Chapter presents useful information about the changes in tourism industry and the new trends of travel agencies. Most of the information is based on statistical data collected by organizations such as the Eurostat, Cyprus Statistical Services and Cyprus Tourism Organization.

2.1 Tourism Industry

Since the establishment of the Republic, tourism played a vital role in the economy of Cyprus and since 1960 it became one of the main tourist centers in the Mediterranean. The country itself has grown to a complete tourist destination, with modern tourist infrastructure, seductive beaches and high quality services. Due to its geographical location and climate, it is able to serve recreation interests, leisure and other types of visits. The rapid and continuous growth of the tourism in the island, has aid too many tourism related companies, such as travel agencies, hotels, hospitality venues, airlines and shipping companies (CTO, Annual Report 2014).

Tourism as already mentioned is a highly profitable sector in Cyprus and this is mainly due to the country's comparative advantage of geographical position and rich natural resources. Tourism types are numerous but for the purposes of this thesis all people, traveling from one country to another regardless the reason and purpose of travel, will be referred to as travelers.

Tourism in Cyprus keeps growing. As the Cyprus Statistical Service has revealed, shown in Table 1, annual results in 2016 present total tourist arrivals of the year 3.186.531 and

revenue received €2.363,4 millions. The change compared to the previous year, 2015, shows an increase of 19,8% for tourist arrivals and 11,9% for revenue received.

STATISTICS ON TOURISM

| PERIOD | Arrivals of tourists | | | | Revenue (€mn) | | | | % Change | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | 2016/15 | | 2016/14 | | 2016/13 | |
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013	2014	2015	2016	Arrivals	Revenue	Arrivals	Revenue	Arrivals	Revenue
JANUARY	42.286	40.675	41.799	48.607	30,9	30,7	28,4	29,1	16,3%	2,5%	19,5%	-5,2%	14,9%	-5,8%
FEBRUARY	42.327	45.227	50.709	65.988	28,3	31,3	30,9	37,6	30,1%	21,7%	45,9%	20,1%	55,9%	32,9%
MARCH	92.620	77.533	97.479	137.013	66,0	56,5	65,0	80,9	40,6%	24,5%	76,7%	43,2%	47,9%	22,6%
APRIL	162.439	180.998	201.495	225.575	110,4	132,9	130,5	137,9	12,0%	5,7%	24,6%	3,8%	38,9%	24,9%
MAY	276.244	293.181	307.449	364.943	202,1	224,1	217,1	244,7	18,7%	12,7%	24,5%	9,2%	32,1%	21,1%
JUNE	308.219	342.221	336.967	413.114	259,8	303,2	259,0	301,0	22,6%	16,2%	20,7%	-0,7%	34,0%	15,9%
JULY	361.442	381.955	414.527	482.132	338,6	321,2	342,1	402,2	16,3%	17,6%	26,2%	25,2%	33,4%	18,8%
AUGUST	352.215	373.086	392.272	458.645	349,5	324,3	358,5	392,2	16,9%	9,4%	22,9%	20,9%	30,2%	12,2%
SEPTEMBER	357.653	316.602	360.899	421.201	353,4	273,4	321,1	337,1	16,7%	5,0%	33,0%	23,3%	17,8%	-4,6%
OCTOBER	273.587	251.453	269.363	357.194	246,6	217,1	225,0	266,0	32,6%	18,2%	42,1%	22,5%	30,6%	7,9%
NOVEMBER	81.542	81.437	108.093	124.192	59,2	65,0	81,9	83,8	14,9%	2,3%	52,5%	28,9%	52,3%	41,6%
DECEMBER	54.813	56.863	78.348	87.927	37,6	43,7	52,6	50,9	12,2%	-3,2%	54,6%	16,5%	60,4%	35,4%
JANUARY-DECEMBER	2.405.390	2.441.239	2.659.405	3.186.531	2.082,4	2.023,4	2.112,1	2.363,4	19,8%	11,9%	30,5%	16,8%	32,5%	13,5%
% Change	-2,4	1,5	8,9	19,8	8,0	-2,8	4,4	11,9						

(Last Updated 01/03/2017)
COPYRIGHT © :2017, REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS, STATISTICAL SERVICE

Table 1: **Arrivals of tourists and Tourism Revenue in Cyprus for the years 2013- 2016**

Even more encouraging, results for January 2017 and February 2017 compared to the same months of previous years, present the incline course of tourism in Cyprus. The increase between January 2016 and January 2017 is about 28,8% for tourist arrivals and 21,6% for revenue received, shown in Table 2.

STATISTICS ON TOURISM

| PERIOD | Arrivals of tourists | | | | Revenue (€mn) | | | | % Change | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | 2017/16 | | 2017/15 | | 2017/14 | |
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017	Arrivals	Revenue	Arrivals	Revenue	Arrivals	Revenue
JANUARY	40.675	41.799	48.607	62.611	30,7	28,4	29,1	35,4	28,8%	21,6%	49,8%	24,6%	53,9%	15,3%
FEBRUARY	45.227	50.709	65.988	82.209	31,3	30,9	37,6							
MARCH	77.533	97.479	137.013		56,5	65,0	80,9							
APRIL	180.998	201.495	225.575		132,9	130,5	137,9							
MAY	293.181	307.449	364.943		224,1	217,1	244,7							
JUNE	342.221	336.967	413.114		303,2	259,0	301,0							
JULY	381.955	414.527	482.132		321,2	342,1	402,2							
AUGUST	373.086	392.272	458.645		324,3	358,5	392,2							
SEPTEMBER	316.602	360.899	421.201		273,4	321,1	337,1							
OCTOBER	251.453	269.363	357.194		217,1	225,0	266,0							
NOVEMBER	81.437	108.093	124.192		65,0	81,9	83,8							
DECEMBER	56.863	78.348	87.927		43,7	52,6	50,9							
JANUARY-DECEMBER	2.441.239	2.659.405	3.186.531		2.023,4	2.112,1	2.363,4							
% Change	1,5	8,9	19,8		-2,8	4,4	11,9							

(Last Updated 03/04/2017)
COPYRIGHT © :2017, REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS, STATISTICAL SERVICE

Table 2: Arrivals of tourists and Tourism Revenue in Cyprus for January and February 2017

In a country that traveler arrivals reached 178.757 and 181.841 in January and February 2017 respectively, and departures were 189.580 and 169.243 in the same months (Table 3), it is easily understood that travel agencies can benefit from both outgoing and incoming tourism, if they succeed to attract and gain these customers.

STATISTICS ON MOVEMENT OF TRAVELERS, FEBRUARY 2017

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
TRAVELERS												
Arrivals	178.757	181.841										
Departures	189.580	169.243										
ARRIVALS BY CATEGORY												
• VISITORS	65.956	85.578										
TOURISTS	62.611	82.209										
SAME - DAY VISITORS	3.345	3.369										
Ports	2.705	2.731										
Airports	640	638										
• RESIDENTS OF CYPRUS	108.981	92.862										
• OTHER TRAVELERS (Immigrants, Temporary Workers etc.)	3.820	3.401										

(Last updated 23/03/2017)
COPYRIGHT © :2017, REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS, STATISTICAL SERVICE

Table 3: Arrivals and Departures of travelers in Cyprus for January and February 2017

Apart from the incoming tourism, travel agencies have the opportunity to deal with outgoing tourism too. As shown in Table 4, Cypriot citizens have great interest in traveling resulting in an increase of 13,3% from 2015 to 2016. It is important to note that the total amount of locals who traveled in 2015 was 1.118.877 increasing to 1.267.894 in 2016.

RETURN OF RESIDENTS TRAVELLING ABROAD, 1999 - 2016

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
TRIPS OF RESIDENTS	540.396	587.622	684.197	744.167	737.309	859.454	913.820	932.116	1.080.512	1.209.802	1.172.268	1.246.378	1.208.899	1.194.053	1.115.226	1.208.792	1.118.877	1.267.894
% change	(11,6)	(8,7)	(16,4)	(8,8)	(-0,9)	(16,6)	(6,3)	(2,0)	(15,9)	(12,0)	(-3,1)	(6,3)	(-3,0)	(-1,2)	(-6,6)	(8,4)	(-7,4)	(13,3)
Main countries visited																		
Greece	206.491	235.397	275.712	306.616	317.256	366.279	390.314	398.877	438.388	446.832	417.710	428.686	395.045	411.288	360.027	451.780	466.086	539.452
	(10,1)	(14,0)	(17,1)	(11,2)	(3,6)	(16,6)	(6,6)	(2,2)	(9,9)	(1,9)	(-6,6)	(2,6)	(-7,8)	(4,1)	(-12,6)	(26,6)	(3,2)	(16,7)
United Kingdom	84.907	82.671	83.100	89.466	96.975	111.311	127.732	157.021	216.759	246.211	271.990	298.440	304.012	311.119	310.099	286.087	186.857	218.175
	(6,6)	(-2,6)	(0,5)	(7,7)	(8,4)	(14,8)	(14,8)	(22,8)	(38,0)	(13,6)	(10,6)	(9,7)	(1,9)	(2,3)	(-0,3)	(-7,7)	(-34,7)	(16,8)
Russia	15.554	21.063	47.016	50.750	43.924	39.492	39.746	39.936	45.364	49.302	48.711	54.625	55.508	51.121	55.745	55.641	48.264	58.727
	(-10,7)	(35,4)	(123,2)	(7,9)	(-13,6)	(-10,1)	(0,6)	(0,5)	(13,6)	(8,7)	(-1,2)	(12,1)	(1,8)	(-7,9)	(9,0)	(-0,2)	(-13,3)	(21,7)
Germany	11.610	12.994	15.063	15.965	16.744	20.507	22.438	23.861	24.063	28.212	23.975	30.302	29.895	...	...	38.002	33.822	35.654
	(8,8)	(11,9)	(16,8)	(6,0)	(4,9)	(22,6)	(9,4)	(6,4)	(0,8)	(17,2)	(-16,0)	(26,4)	(-1,3)		...	...	(-11,0)	(6,4)
Romania	6.094	6.871	8.079	8.212	9.189	9.753	13.463	15.990	22.580	29.404	35.711	45.393	45.042	...	...	34.711	36.682	39.808
	(11,9)	(12,8)	(17,6)	(1,6)	(11,9)	(6,1)	(38,0)	(18,8)	(41,2)	(30,2)	(21,4)	(27,1)	(-0,8)		...	...	(6,7)	(8,6)
France	9.745	14.115	16.444	16.360	16.979	23.059	23.222	23.034	23.095	29.341	24.270	26.064	23.234	...	...	26.474	20.331	21.133
	(8,4)	(44,8)	(16,6)	(-0,5)	(3,8)	(35,8)	(0,7)	(-0,8)	(0,3)	(27,0)	(-17,3)	(7,4)	(-10,8)		...	...	(-23,2)	(3,8)
Bulgaria	9.736	10.616	12.866	17.344	17.628	19.997	21.599	24.512	29.498	32.259	29.695	29.305	28.211	...	...	25.187	29.268	28.902
	(19,4)	(8,0)	(21,2)	(34,8)	(1,6)	(13,4)	(8,0)	(13,6)	(20,3)	(8,4)	(-7,9)	(-1,3)	(-3,7)		...	...	(16,2)	(-1,3)
Sex (%)																		
Males	49,9	50,1	51,5	50,2	49,5	47,6	44,0	44,6	45,3	44,2	48,4	46,5	45,9	42,6	42,1	44,8	47,7	51,8
Females	50,1	49,9	48,5	49,8	50,5	52,4	56,0	55,4	54,7	55,8	51,6	53,5	54,1	57,4	57,9	55,2	52,3	48,2
Age (%)																		
15 - 24 years	18,1	19,0	22,4	20,0	21,3	18,9	19,2	20,5	17,1	18,3	15,9	18,1	19,8	17,1	15,0	16,5	16,3	14,8
25 - 44 years	44,7	44,9	47,6	46,3	45,8	45,9	45,5	43,5	43,2	43,4	44,5	44,7	45,6	48,2	47,7	47,5	47,1	48,5
45 - 64 years	27,5	27,8	24,0	27,8	26,4	28,6	28,6	29,1	32,6	31,5	31,1	28,2	26,6	27,5	29,2	29,1	28,7	29,4
Purpose of trip (%)																		
Holidays	65,3	62,6	62,8	62,7	63,0	65,5	64,1	64,2	66,0	65,5	67,9	67,3	68,1	...	...	68,3	70,2	70,8
Business	21,7	22,9	23,3	24,0	22,3	21,0	21,3	20,4	20,3	20,6	20,5	19,3	18,1	...	...	19,4	19,6	20,7
Studies	9,3	10,0	11,9	11,1	12,7	11,1	11,9	13,1	10,7	10,6	8,3	9,3	10,7	...	...	9,9	7,8	6,5
Other	3,7	4,5	2,0	2,2	2,0	2,4	2,7	2,3	3,0	3,3	3,3	4,1	3,1	...	...	2,4	2,4	2,0
Average stay (nights)																		
Less than one month	...	...	7,0	7,0	6,7	6,3	6,5	6,5	7,1	7,2	7,4	7,5	7,3	...	...	7,5	6,8	6,6
Less than one year	...	...	9,6	9,6	9,6	8,6	9,2	9,3	10,1	9,6	9,8	9,8	9,4	...	...	9,9	9,5	9,0

... : Data not available.

(Last updated 23/02/2017)

Table 4: Return of residents travelling abroad for the years 1999 - 2016

2.2 Changes in Travel Agencies

As intermediaries between the customers who seek to travel and the companies who provide tourism services, such as airlines, cruise lines and hotels, travel agencies can be considered as an important factor of global tourism industry growth. Travel agencies in Cyprus aim to provide information, advice and assistance to travelers to visit the island or to locals that want to travel abroad. Also, the role of travel agencies can be described

as part of the country's marketing policy to demonstrate the tourist product on the international tourism market.

However, the changing environment of the industry has let aside a lot of travel agencies. Technology and online services provide tools to travelers to make their own reservations regarding their vacations, to run cost comparisons for their travel and accommodation and receive great package deals. In a global marketplace where access to information is free and fast, travel agencies need to adopt new strategies than decrease prices for the services offered, in order to maintain profit margins (Perramon et al., 2015).

Online information sharing has limited the difficulties of the past and has opened the way to frequent movements of people between countries. According to Eurostat "*With 4 out of 10 Europeans looking online for travel related information, the internet is a major communication channel for the tourism sector*" (Eurostat, 2/2016). Internet therefore drastically changed the way that travel arrangements are booked letting the traditional way of business in the margin.

It is obvious that travel agencies which do not exploit opportunities created by technology, sooner or later will see their sales and profits decline. Focusing on the research question, travelers exploit online opportunities themselves by self-booking their vacations and travels in general (see Table 5).

It is well known that the new generation uses online means for the purchase of goods and services at a high percentage. According to data retrieved from Eurostat, there is a continuous growth of this trend and more specifically, in general purchases, this resulted in an increase from 56% in 2010 to 65% in 2016. Concerning purchases related to accommodation and other travel arrangements, the percentage of people that used the internet increased from 29% in 2010 to 34% in 2016. This percentage includes all internet users, both individuals and businesses.
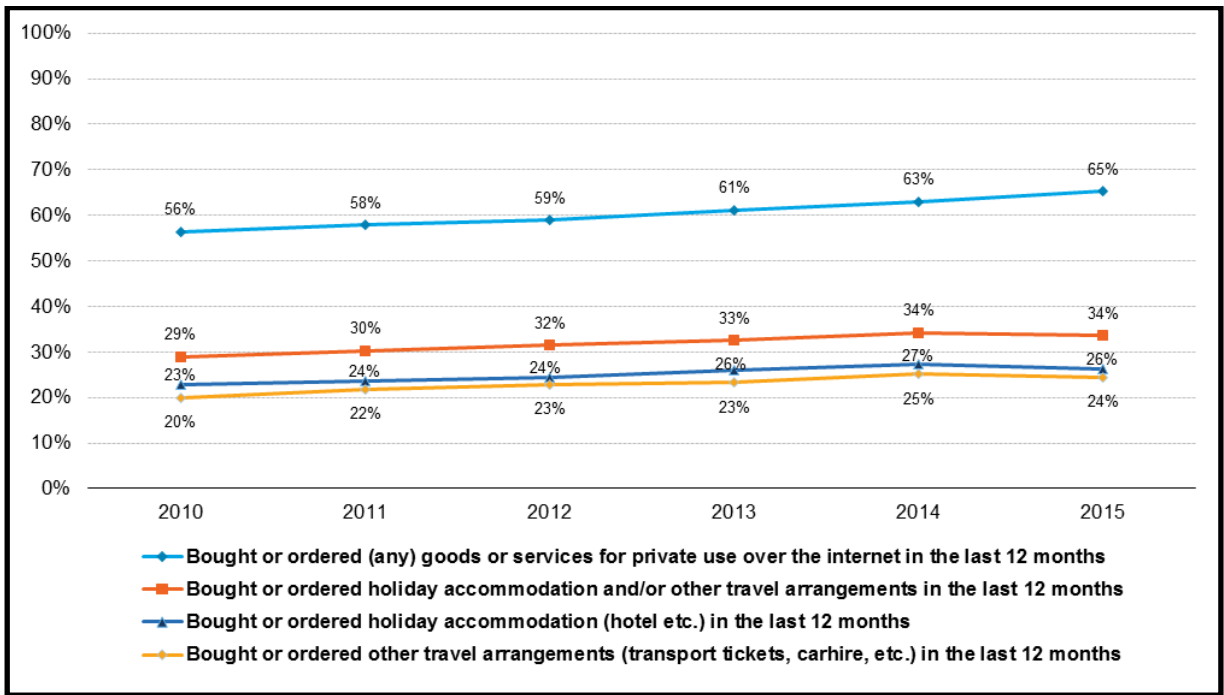
Table 5: Internet use for buying or ordering travel related services (as % of all internet users), EU-28, 2010-2015

More specifically, online booking for accommodation is greater in ages 25-34 and 35-44, whereas online booking for air travel is greater in ages 15-24 and 25-34. The lowest levels appear to be in the age of 65 and onwards, in both categories and this is a market segment that travel agencies with physical presence target.
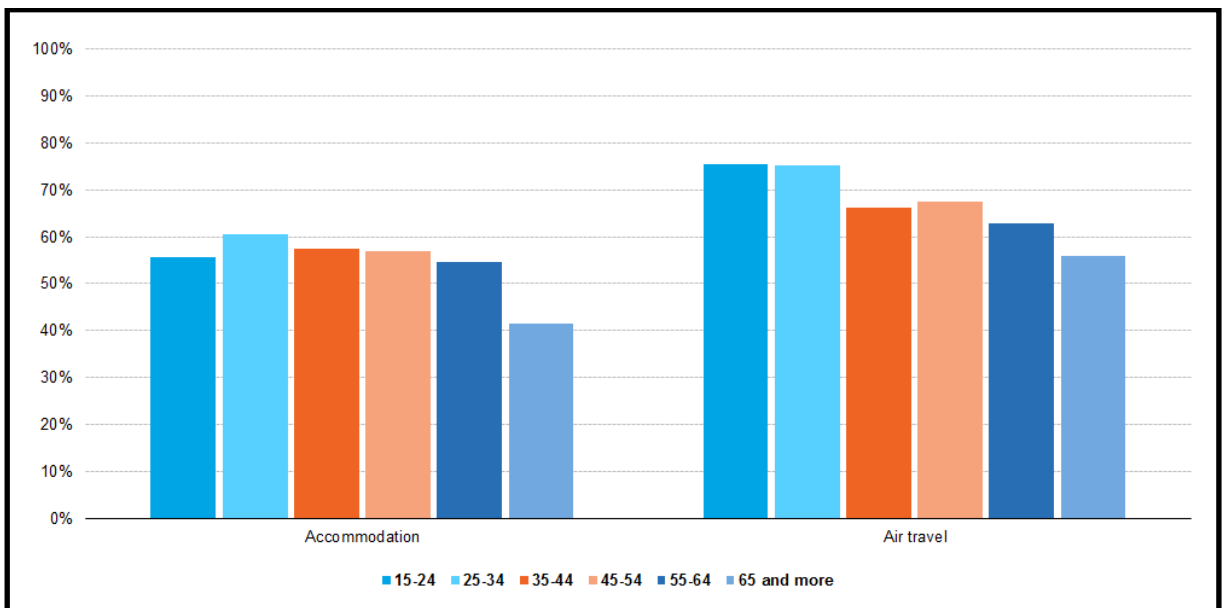
Table 6: Online booking for tourist accommodation (% of all trips spent at rented accommodation) and for air travel by age, EU-28, 2014

Cyprus related results presented in Table 7, shows that 43,9% of travelers use online booking regarding accommodation and 29,9% for travel transport, of which 67,10% is for air transports. It is apparent that the new trend of internet bookings exists in the island too.

	Accommodation (% of all trips spent at rented accommodation)			Transport (% of all trips)	
				All modes of transport	Air transport
	Total	Domestic	Outbound		
EU-28 (¹)	54.8	52.1	59.2	23.6	67.4
Belgium	47.4	56.5	45.6	25.0	44.9
Bulgaria	8.9	10.1	:u	:u	:u
Czech Republic	39.8	41.1	38.3	3.1	38.1
Denmark	52.0	47.2	55.9	62.6	57.4
Germany	60.0	61.2	58.3	23.9	68.9
Estonia	58.6	57.7	59.3	23.2	66.5
Ireland	55.8	51.6	59.5	38.1	75.1
Greece	30.1	28.4	40.6	8.4	46.6
Spain	19.2(u)	16.2(u)	34.8(u)	4.0	34.2(u)
France	68.0	67.3	70.4	68.2(u)	77.1
Croatia	31.9	22.5	40.1	7.2	59.9
Italy	45.0	40.8	57.8	17.8	61.9
Cyprus	43.9	30.5	54.1	29.9	67.1
Latvia	52.8(u)	33.1(u)	61.9	13.6	67.6
Lithuania	32.2	7.0	61.3	15.8	68.9
Luxembourg	67.4	:u	67.4	32.4	74.2
Hungary	64.7 (u)	60.6	:u	7.0	:u
Malta	48.0	29.6	54.9	40.0	59.6
Netherlands	68.7	63.4	72.8	17.3	81.3
Austria	51.6	47.6	55.1	19.0	67.0
Poland	:u	:u	52.5(u)	20.9(u)	64.3(u)
Portugal	20.2	:u	72.7	6.1	64.8
Romania	7.1	5.6	19.8	1.2	23.0
Slovenia	35.1	30.3	37.4	5.9	62.5
Slovakia	29.0	33.2(u)	27.0	7.8(u)	26.6
Finland	64.5	54.7	76.7	25.9	90.2
Sweden	59.5(u)	49.4(u)	77.0(u)	35.6	84.9(u)

Table 7: Online booking for tourist accommodation and transport, 2014

Furthermore, the percentage of European Union's individuals that use internet to consult, order or buy services related to travel is 39%, of whom 50% used it in the last three months of 2015, as shown in Table 8. As the Eurostat survey states "*With 4 out of 10 Europeans looking online for travel related information, the internet is a major communication channel for the tourism sector. Over 1 in 3 internet users bought or ordered travel related services online.*" (Eurostat, Statistics on ICT Use in Tourism, 2016).

In the same table, data show that 33% of Cypriot citizens use internet for travel related activities, and 46% of them have used internet in the last quarter of 2015. The percentage of 33% of Cyprus is very close to the percentage of 39% of European Union, which means that Cypriot citizens follow the worldwide trend of online use.

| | Internet use related to travel (consult, order, buy, etc.) | | Participation in tourism for personal purposes (% of population aged 15+) |
	as % of all individuals (aged 16-74)	as % of individuals who used internet in the last 3 months	
EU-28	39	50	60
Belgium	46	54	57
Bulgaria	17	30	26
Czech Republic	48	59	84
Denmark	66	68	83
Germany	58	66	76
Estonia	37	42	71
Ireland	42	53	74
Greece	21	31	38
Spain	41	53	53
France	43	51	71
Croatia	38	55	49
Italy	25	38	38
Cyprus	33	46	62
Latvia	21	27	51
Lithuania	9	13	58
Luxembourg	66	68	82
Hungary	26	35	53
Malta	45	59	53
Netherlands	49	53	82
Austria	44	53	76
Poland	17	25	53
Portugal	21	30	39
Romania	13	23	:
Slovenia	39	53	63
Slovakia	35	46	54
Finland	64	69	89
Sweden	51	56	77
United Kingdom	47	51	:
Norway	62	64	:
FYR of Macedonia	13	19	:
Turkey	10	20	:

Table 8: Internet use related to travel (2015) and participation in tourism (2014)

The above data are very useful to the current research, especially for understanding the competition that travel agencies face in Cyprus. It is obvious that one third of Cypriots use internet for travel related activities, which means that travel agencies' work is decreased by one third.

The analysis of the travel related activities is also valuable, because it categorizes the areas of interest that individuals look for while using the internet. According to Table 9, the main categories that the survey was focused on were online purchases or orders for any goods or services, holiday accommodation, other travel arrangements such as transport tickets and car hire. Statistics show that 65%, 26% and 24% of European Union citizens and 32%, 12% and 15% of Cypriot citizens had interaction with the above categories respectively.

	Any goods or services	Holiday accommodation	Other travel arrangements (transport tickets, carhire, etc.)	At least one of the two services
EU-28	65	26	24	34
Belgium	64	25	18	30
Bulgaria	31	8	5	9
Czech Republic	55	10	7	14
Denmark	82	47	51	59
Germany	82	34	25	40
Estonia	66	25	35	40
Ireland	63	34	36	41
Greece	47	6	9	11
Spain	53	29	25	33
France	74	23	32	39
Croatia	44	8	7	10
Italy	39	12	11	16
Cyprus	32	12	15	16
Latvia	48	7	8	10
Lithuania	44	6	6	9
Luxembourg	80	42	36	50
Hungary	47	19	8	20
Malta	66	30	27	32
Netherlands	76	44	31	48
Austria	68	32	25	38
Poland	53	6	7	10
Portugal	44	20	18	24
Romania	18	3	2	4
Slovenia	52	11	6	13
Slovakia	61	14	8	18
Finland	76	43	42	53
Sweden	78	37	49	53
United Kingdom	87	44	43	55
Norway	78	44	48	55
FYR of Macedonia	16	3	1	3
Turkey	29	4	8	9

Table 9: Individuals who bought or ordered goods or services for private use over the internet in the last 12 months (as % of all individuals who used internet within the last year), 2015

It is worth noting that even if 33% of Cypriot citizens (Table 8) use internet for travel related activities and only 12%/15% of them (Table 9) actually buy or order travel related activities online. This is very important to the current research because it means that the impact of internet on travel agencies in Cyprus is still below the average of European Union.

Probably the most useful table of this research is the following one, because it presents data regarding the preference of individuals to choose among a travel agency or make a booking independently in 2014. According to Table 10, for transport services, 68.665.358 trips from the 28 countries of European Union were booked via a travel agency whereas 100.524.795 trips were booked online directly from the service provider. In addition, for accommodation services, total number of trips via a travel agency was 97.983.397 and through direct internet booking was 164.798.886. In general, independent direct booking occurred in 393.312.543 trips.

Trip Arrangements / Geographical Area	Total	Package Travel	Non-Package Travel	Booking transport via travel agency	Booking accomodation via travel agency	Internet booking of transport	Internet booking of accomodation	Independent direct booking	Independent direct no need of booking
European Union (28 countries)	890,714,692 (e)	39,598,185 (e)	851,116,507 (e)	68,665,358 (e)	97,983,397 (e)	100,524,795 (e)	164,798,886 (e)	393,312,543 (e)	346,157,738 (e)
European Union (27 countries)	885,604,088 (e)	39,439,384 (e)	846,164,705 (e)	68,500,588 (e)	97,907,765 (e)	100,546,694 (e)	164,623,621 (e)	393,231,505 (e)	341,326,544 (e)
Euro area (EA11-2000, EA12-2)	616,178,751 (e)	29,049,022 (e)	587,129,729 (e)	53,214,626 (e)	79,192,339 (e)	65,321,779 (e)	129,305,422 (e)	315,905,261 (e)	181,922,265 (e)
Belgium	2,253,573	38,312 (u)	2,215,261	79,550	179,041	258,315	947,733	1,421,453	640,938
Bulgaria	3,170,122	149,187	3,020,934	93,773	112,956	:	164,824	1,490,806	1,372,010
Czech Republic	27,042,044	125,616 (u)	26,916,428	76,980 (u)	368,879	231,276	2,168,205	3,906,255	22,756,602
Denmark	23,873,536	1,679,586	22,193,951	1,903,647	458,156	14,648,393	2,285,932	7,168,610	14,528,912
Germany (until 1990 former te	153,901,939	17,442,650	136,459,289	7,999,328	11,945,853	26,182,743	54,282,996	115,748,406	23,100,742
Estonia	2,572,332	20,572 (u)	2,551,760	: (u)	43,486	190,123	413,592	226,744	2,295,726
Ireland	6,020,143	301,013	5,719,129	35,734 (u)	262,982	373,423	1,862,140	3,138,047	2,446,727
Greece	5,621,981	229,190	5,392,791	460,116	301,150	305,558	585,089	319,904	2,311,057
Spain	117,619,961	2,652,762	114,967,198	2,977,325	4,022,330	1,966,187	4,361,491	26,299,166	86,314,913
Croatia	5,410,179	180,797	5,229,382	216,943	170,315	87,862	328,416	489,336	4,586,676
Italy	43,516,686	818,059 (u)	42,698,628	2,036,688	3,215,986	4,579,667	9,347,270	24,776,193	14,805,200
Cyprus	1,297,214	97,033	1,200,181		127,514		153,039	355,248	48,850
Latvia	3,257,763	: (u)	3,244,248	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	104,492	34,251 (u)	3,182,800
Lithuania	2,649,216	:	2,649,216	20,864	497,526	44,376	84,227	:	2,142,058
Luxembourg	30,202	: (u)	24,415	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	17,402 (u)	7,013 (u)
Hungary	12,583,784	137,842	12,445,942	114,410	134,725	314,007	2,669,140	3,563,057	8,882,885
Malta	158,332		158,332		13,248	:	31,975	59,537	81,967
Netherlands	24,777,935	53,657 (u)	24,724,279	149,867	3,568,871	157,032	7,430,842	10,192,414	9,983,269
Austria	11,476,014	2,172,501	9,303,513	174,851	1,057,399	866,741	3,762,754	7,084,860	2,710,531
Poland	38,387,005	366,962	38,020,043	392,204	539,906	549,589	3,338,318	7,064,903	30,777,557
Portugal	13,195,293	191,242	13,004,050	413,146	1,101,270	:	:	1,521,536	10,320,026
Romania	16,358,249	551,691	15,806,558	297,074	736,579	57,057	223,537	726,819	14,829,254
Slovenia	1,888,108	22,032 (u)	1,866,076	27,086 (u)	130,807	: (u)	240,873	726,252	1,023,695

Table 10: Number of Trips via travel agency and independently, 2014

In the case of Cyprus, there are no data available for transport booking to analyze. However, it seems that in the 2014 survey of Eurostat, 127.514 trips had accommodation bookings via a travel agency whereas 153.039 used internet booking directly from the service provider. In general, 355.248 trips used independent direct booking. This is half of Cyprus population, but unfortunately there is no evidence that one trip is equals to one person.

It is also important to consider that the above table shows that Cypriot citizens tend to buy non-package travels much more than package travels. More precisely, only 97.033 trips were related to packages and 1.200.181 did not. Focusing on the preferred choices of customers, is fundamental in planning an e-marketing strategy for Let's Go Tours. The travel agency therefore should focus in offering non-package travels in order to increase its market share.

Focusing on the reasons why travelers choose to book their reservations themselves, the following list provides possible explanations:

a) Travelers do not appreciate the value added from travel agencies and believe that they can plan, reserve and prepare their travel on their own. According to researches, if travel agencies permit high level of distance between them and their customers then communication, dependence, cooperation and commitment will all driven to a negative course (Leonidou et al., 2006).

b) Travelers due to their access to online data have become more demanding from travel agencies.

c) Travelers tend to seek "experience-driven" travels, than "destination-driven" and most of the travel agencies do not provide such information (Morgan et al., 2007). Travelers with the use of internet, have the availability to search and study videos, pictures and other travelers' recommendations and views about the destination. All these are not part of the usual operations of a travel agency.

d) Travelers seem more interested in quick customer service and more cost-effective travel solutions. They believe that contacting a travel agency will take longer than the amount of time they will spend themselves if they do the travel research. Also, they want to save the money paid for travel agencies' fees elsewhere (Hatton, 2003).

e) Travelers are confident in using online services and trust e-commerce businesses (Wen, 2009). Therefore having the belief that information is reliable, travelers enter directly the supplier's website.

2.3 Major Online Travel Agencies

This section presents the major online travel agencies worldwide, in order to understand how other travel agencies operate through the internet. The data collected was based on the World Travel Awards, which is the most prestigious awards program in the travel industry, and on other surveys such as the eBiz, which presents data for May 2017.

Based on the World Travel Awards, the World's Leading Online Travel Agency of 2016 was Rovia. The specific company won the same prize in 2014 and it would be essential to study its success. Rovia was the winner for providing memory related travel services to its business partners and membership based companies, delivering the highest standards of service to the travel market. Its slogan is "We create travelers" and achieved to provide 6,000 trips, to 800,000 travelers, sending groups in 80 countries and travelers to 170 countries only in 2016.

Rovia's website is available only to its members and that is directly connected to providing personalized online bookings. This is the main differentiation that the specific online travel agency has. To gain access to the company's services, customers need to contact Rovia first. This is unusual because other companies simply provide an online "sign up" option for their customers. The company creates a close relationship with its customers in this way. Also, Rovia with this private customer relationship, offers discounts which are confidential and only its partners are aware. Rovia's market segments, except individual, group and corporate travelers, include:

  ➢ MICE trips, which is the acronym for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions. The company has a global network of conference centers, meeting planners, resorts and other partners who organize events. The company collaborates with them by offering all travel related services to the participants.
  ➢ Voluntours, which are specially - designed travels combining travelling and volunteering of services with specific missions.

Except from Rovia, other travel agencies nominated for World's Leading Online Travel Agency 2016 were Booking.com, ebookers.com, eDreams, Expedia, Flighsite.co.za, Flyin.com, Opodo, Orbitz, Priceline.com, Travelocity and Travelstart.co.za.

The above companies, even though they do not provide all types of travel related services, are considered as travel agencies for the purposes of this thesis. The survey of eBiz has ranked the top fifteen, most popular travel websites as follows, based on visitors reach, and all of them are accepted as travel agencies:

List of Top 15 Most Popular Websites May 2017

1. Booking.com with 40,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.
2. Tripadvisor with 38,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.
3. Yahoo Travel with 36,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.
4. Expedia with 25,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.
5. Priceline with 20,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.
6. Hotels.com with 16,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.
7. Travelocity with 14,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.
8. Kayak with 13,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.
9. Orbitz with 11,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.
10. Hotwire with 8,500,000 estimated monthly visitors.
11. Home Away with 8,250,000 estimated monthly visitors.
12. Travel Zoo with 7,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.
13. Air BnB with 6,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.
14. Lonely Planet with 4,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.
15. Viator with 3,000,000 estimated monthly visitors.

Figure 1: Top 15 Most Popular Websites - May 2017

Based on the data presented in this Chapter, tourism industry is growing and changing at the same time. Travelers increasingly trust the use of internet, skipping travel agencies' ability to help them. Statistics show that almost four out of ten people order or buy services related to travel through the internet, ignoring the added value that travel agencies offer. Consumers have become more demanding due to their own access to online data. Cypriot citizens appear to follow this online trend and local travel agencies need to react to remain in business. Evidence show that, popular travel agencies have succeeded to have an online presence with millions of monthly visitors. By running their services through the internet, they enjoy high revenues and profits.

Chapter 3
Case Study: Let's Go Tours

This Chapter focuses on examining a specific travel agency in Cyprus, called Let's Go Tours. Internal company information is provided such as company description, selling procedure and sales history. Later on, an analysis of the company's marketing targets and current e-marketing strategies follows, as a basis to develop an effective e-marketing plan in Chapter 5.

3.1 Company Description and Services Provided

Let's Go Tours is a brand name of Amathus Corporation Ltd, a travel and tour operator. It was established in 1947 in Cyprus, with main mission to provide competitive travel deals and vacation to its customers. After 60 years of customer service, Let's Go Tours became one of the most successful travel agencies in Cyprus, realizing brand awareness and recognition from Cypriot citizens and foreigners.

The company has proudly achieved to have offices in major cities of the island, providing professional services and expertise to travelers. It is probably the only travel agency in Cyprus, that accomplished to expand its operations to other major capitals around the world, such as Athens, London and Moscow.

The company provides all travel related services, such as reservations, air and sea ticketing, cruises, sightseeing tours and hotel bookings. Customers may visit the company's offices and receive a face to face customer service from the company's experienced staff or book their trip via the company's website.

Let's Go Tours marketing slogan is "We offer more" and this is visible to everyone who enters the company's offices or website. More specifically, it is the oldest and one of the largest travel agencies in Cyprus, achieving long term experience, expertise and

knowledge. As Figure 1 shows, retrieved from the company's website, Let's Go Tours among others offers a range of choices of more than 150.000 hotels and 330 airlines. The 24/7 emergency service of Let's Go Tours, is an added value to the superb existing service of the company.

We	Offer	More
❯ 65+ years experience	❯ 150,000+ hotels	❯ better travel ideas
❯ expertise & knowledge	❯ 330+ airlines	❯ unbeatable selection
❯ passion for travel	❯ services and destinations	❯ best prices
❯ financial credibility	❯ secure transactions	❯ great savings
❯ global reach	❯ 24/7 emergency service	❯ excellent service

Figure 2: Let's Go Tour Slogan and Promotion

3.2 Selling Procedure and Customer Service

Being one of the largest travel agencies in Cyprus, Let's Go Tours, employs many employees in order to provide specialized services. At this part of the thesis, details about the company's selling procedure and customer service provision will be analyzed.

3.2.1 Selling Procedure Diagram

Let's Go Tours, in order to provide high value of services, has chosen to communicate with customers in a number of ways. Customers can be served by phone, by visiting one of the company's offices, through its website or through its Facebook account.

Customer service via telephone can be direct such as providing a quick reservation or indirect by transferring the call to one of the company's travel consultant specialist. In the case of the second scenario, which is similar to visiting the company's premises, travel dates, destination and travel purpose are asked in the beginning in order to contact the related specialist. For long distance destinations, such as the United States of America, there is a different consultant, who is trained accordingly. Let's Go Tours believes that in order to differentiate its services, some employees need to be oriented in particular areas of travel.

Assuming that the call is transferred to the appropriate consultant or an appointment is booked, the employee focusing on the customers' needs and requests, will provide all relevant guidance and consultancy. Through discussion, the consultant will analyze customers' preferences and offer its valuable knowledge. Some days for an offer preparation will be allowed and then customers will be contacted to provide feedback. In case that customers need to change parts of the consultant's proposal, then research is conducted again. When customers approve Let's Go Tours offer, then travel arrangements are made and customers pay the agreed amount.
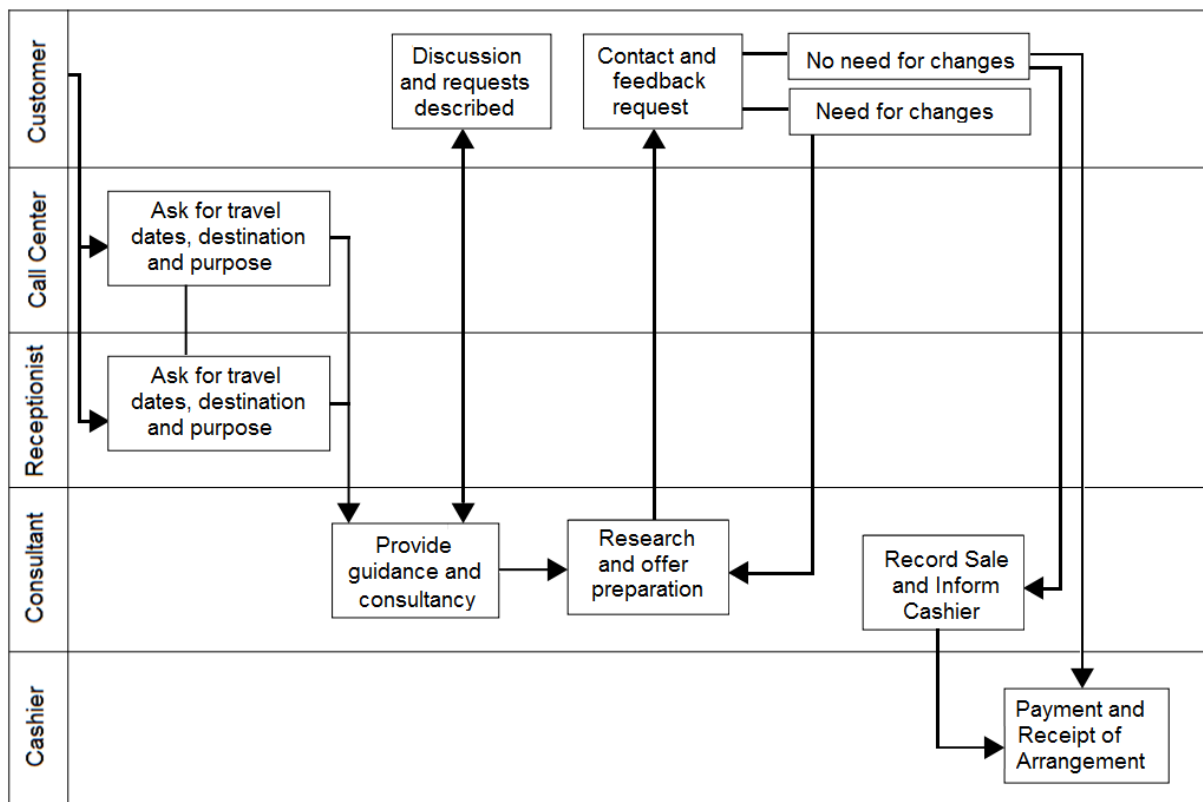
Figure 3: Let's Go Tours Selling Procedure Diagram

Regarding online customer service, the procedure is less time-consuming but also less customized (Deng et al., 2000). All information about travel packages is available via the company's website and only within a few seconds, tickets and accommodation can be booked. As soon as visitors enter the website, they may click among the different services that the company provides, according to their preferences like flights, hotels, flights & hotels, cruises, packages, cars and transfers reservations can be obtained.

Web visitors only need to type the desired city, departure and return date as well as the number of adults and children involved. Then the website upon collected information will provide available offers. Visitors may choose among the alternatives and pay the amount shown with their debit or credit card. Further information will be analyzed in section 3.5.

3.2.2 Customer Service Importance

Let's Go Tours way of business is based on the balanced scorecard developed by Kaplan and Norton (Harmon, 2014). The company's management team strongly believes that profits depend on customer satisfaction and high quality of customer service. This element is highly valued diachronically and it is a core element of the company's strategy. In Figure 4, Let's Go Tours has revealed in detail the hierarchy's components.

Final Stage
Financial Perspective
(Cash Flows, Profits, Sales Increase, ROCE)

Third Stage
Customer Perspective
(Suggestion & Complaint Box, Repeat Orders)

Second Stage
Internal Business Perspective
(Low cost, Quick Customer Service, Services Range)

First Stage
Innovation and Learning Perspective
(Have an organizational learning ability)

Figure 4: Let's Go Tours Balanced Scorecard

Analyzing the hierarchy from the top to the bottom, Let's Go Tours has adopted the belief that financial results depend on customer perspective. Positive cash flows, profits, increase of sales and return on capital employed will not be achieved if customers are not happy with what the company offers them. Customers' opinion is recognized by the company and it is the immediate factor that contributes in accomplishing the final stage. Having said that and moving on the previous stage, Let's Go Tours keeps statistics on customers' satisfaction. By placing a suggestion and complaint box both on its premises and on its website, data collected about customers' perspective to the company'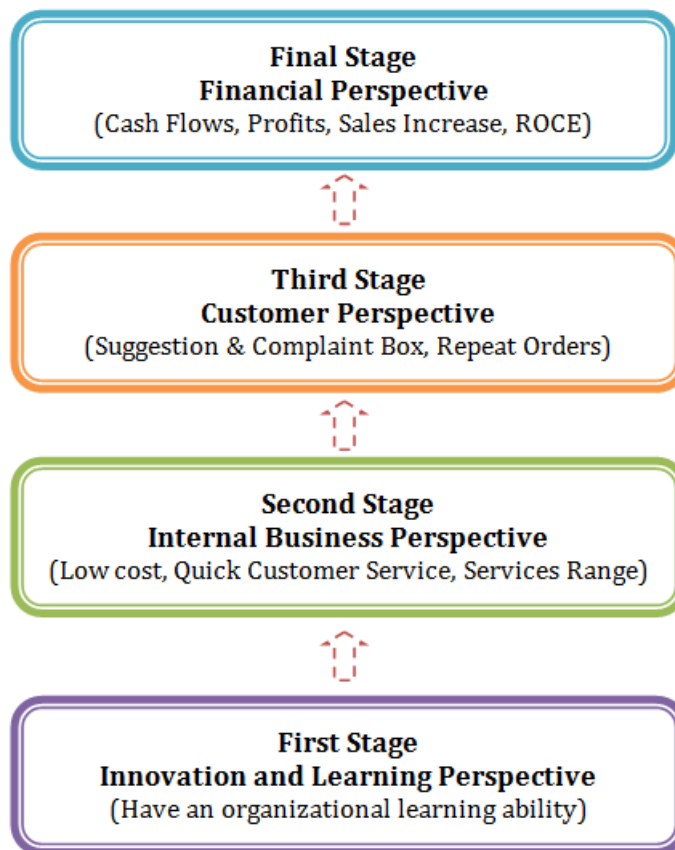s services is possible. In addition, by keeping documents for each customer, the company proceeds to an analysis for repeat orders, sales growth, friends and relatives being recommended and many other ratings.

Moreover, customers do not think highly of a company without a reason and Let's Go Tours agrees with this opinion. The company focuses on doing well internally such as:

a) Providing travel packages as low cost as possible maintaining high rated air and cruise lines and prize-winning hotels.

b) Delivering quick customer service without shifting away from customers' requests and interest.

c) Offering a huge range of services and exclusive offers that nowhere else are found.

The management team of Let's Go Tours does not act in isolation but collaborates with the other employees at all company's operating segments. It has been disclosed that all employees have influenced plans and enterprise marketing activities of Let's Go Tours. Due to the peculiarities of the tourism product, all employees offering services to customers have a key role to their satisfaction. For this reason, the development of good relations between management and employees is one of the most important objectives that Let's Go Tours pursues.

Taking for example the marketing function of the company, to develop good relationships and create good conditions for cooperation, employees are informed about the marketing plans of the business to ensure support and to create a climate of mutual trust. Before conducting a market research, the marketing department requires the contribution of other departments to submit their proposals. In the end, everyone is

informed about the new activities implemented regarding the course of the business. Employees are considered as partners in a common effort, therefore meeting the company's needs in the best possible way is feasible. In this way the company avoids conflicts and disputes and the management's decisions are not overwritten.

To accomplish the above, the company invests in innovation and continuous learning in many ways. This stage answers the question "How does Let's Go Tours do, what it does well?" Having in mind the changing environment of the industry, the company realizes that it cannot sit back and keep running operations as years ago. The management team understands that what kept customer satisfied when the company started will not keep it nowadays. This is one of the main reasons that management team became interested in the specific research. Let's Go Tours in order to remain successful, tries to respond on market, competition and technology changes. As it was declared in the interviews, "Rapid changes need rapid reactions", otherwise it may be too late for the company to get back to the business field and may need to withdraw.

Let's Go Tours management team mentioned that in order to maintain the company's success and competitive advantage, several steps are taken such as:
a) Every calendar year, new packages and destinations are launched with new and/or existing partnerships. Tourism infrastructure keeps growing globally and as a result new hotels are built and more countries become attractive. Let's Go Tours tries to be updated on such news to draw the attention of more customers.
b) Best deals with allies. Long-term relationship with allies has the benefit of more discounts to the company, as a result the benefit to be transferred to the customer.
c) Money spent on research and development such as new marketing methods and use of online means.
d) Money spent on staff training to improve services delivered, gain better expertise and become more familiar to online tools.

Concluding, organizational learning ability is a core element of a company's strategy. As researchers have found (Theodosiou et al. 2012), being able to take advantage of external knowledge is a way of maintaining competitive advantage, improving the company's performance against its rivals.

24

3.3 Sales History

Let's Go Tours was keen on sharing its sales data for the purposes of this thesis. As it was mentioned, the company had around €1,000,000 sales at the first years of its operations. Before the financial crisis of 2008, it reached €10,000,000 sales becoming a leading travel agency in Cyprus. However, the past years company sales fell to €7,000,000 and the company's management charged the financial crisis and online competition for this outcome.

3.4 Marketing Objectives

Let's Go Tours has set specific marketing objectives to maintain steady growth regarding its market share, market segments, sales and other targets. This section analyses the company's targets, in order to gain a better understanding of how the e-marketing plan is to be structured later o as in-depth analysis of the e-Marketing Objectives of the company, its targeting and positioning will be analyzed in more detail in Chapter 5.

3.4.1 Market Share Targets

Due to the fact that there has not been any survey about each travel agency's market share in Cyprus until now, evidence from the main social media accounts that Cyprus businesses have will be used. Facebook is probably the only source from which such conclusions can be drawn, but it must be noted that is not a reliable source for measuring market share , therefore the findings are indicative.

Among its local competitors, Let's Go Tours appears to enjoy high market share based on its Facebook followers that reach 23.339. Some of the competitors of Let's go Tours can be found in Table 11.

Travel Agency Name	Followers
Top Kinisis Travel	49.723
Knossos Travel	42.876
Pluton Travel & Tours	16.778
Xenos Travel by Royal Holidays	9.446
Amazing Trips by Antoniou & Patsalides Travel & Tours	4.898

Table 11: Let's Go Tours Competitors based on Facebook Followers

It can be assumed that the big difference between Let's Go Tours and Top Kinisis Travel is due to the competitive advertising campaign of the latter.

Recently, the specific company had a Live Link in its premises, by one of the most famous radio stations of Cyprus, attracting the attention of local people. In addition, it has invested heavily in promotion as it uses YouTube video advertisements. The difference between Let's Go Tours and Knossos Travel may have been caused by the fact that the second travel agency has obtained the world wide prize of being "Cyprus Leading Travel Agency in 2016" from World Travel Awards and therefore enjoys high publicity.

The above data show that Let's Go Tours is among the first top five travel agencies in Cyprus based on Facebook followers. The company's vision related to market share targeting is to be considered the first choice of local travelers and to reach the 10% of local travelers.

3.4.2 Market Segment Targets

Currently the company provides services mainly to the following markets:
   a) Individuals, who wish to plan their vacations.
   b) Honeymooners, who wish to plan their honeymoon holidays.
   c) Groups of people, such as school students, who wish to plan team travels.
   d) Business to Business customers (B2B)

Let's Go Tours though has identified other markets that would like to target. Some of them are already served but not at a high volume. These are:
   a) Business travelers
   b) Sports travelers
   c) Religion travelers
   d) Luxury holiday travelers
   e) Themed trips

Findings show that common travelers demand travel agencies which provide services of general interest. However, these agencies are rejected when it comes to individuals or groups with special needs (Ozogul et al., 2016). Referring to the case of Rovia mentioned

earlier, it could be suggested that its differentiation to providing Voluntours and MICE trips has helped the company to become a leading travel agency around the globe. Therefore, finding new customer segments can be considered as a core element in experiencing growth.

3.4.3 Sales Targets

Based on the company's sales data presented in Section 3.3, Let's Go Tours Management wishes to achieve a further 5% sales growth in 2017. In monetary terms this translates to €7,350,000 sales. Even if the company had reached sales of €10,000,000 in the past, it sets realistic and achievable targets keeping in mind current trends and competition.

3.5 Current E-Marketing Activities and Targets

The steady growth of tourism industry in Cyprus has caused the growth of new travel agencies which are focused on high-tech tools and strong online presence. As a result, Let's Go Tours was forced to adopt the new trends of the century in order to catch up its competitors. Currently, in order to enhance competitiveness, Let's Go Tours has developed common online means. These are mainly its website and Facebook page, which as it will be discussed further on, need improvement.

3.5.1 Website

Let's Go Tours' official website can be easily found because its domain name is the same as the company's name: www.letsgotours.com. It is available in two languages and its home page presents all services provided and promotions (see Figure 5).
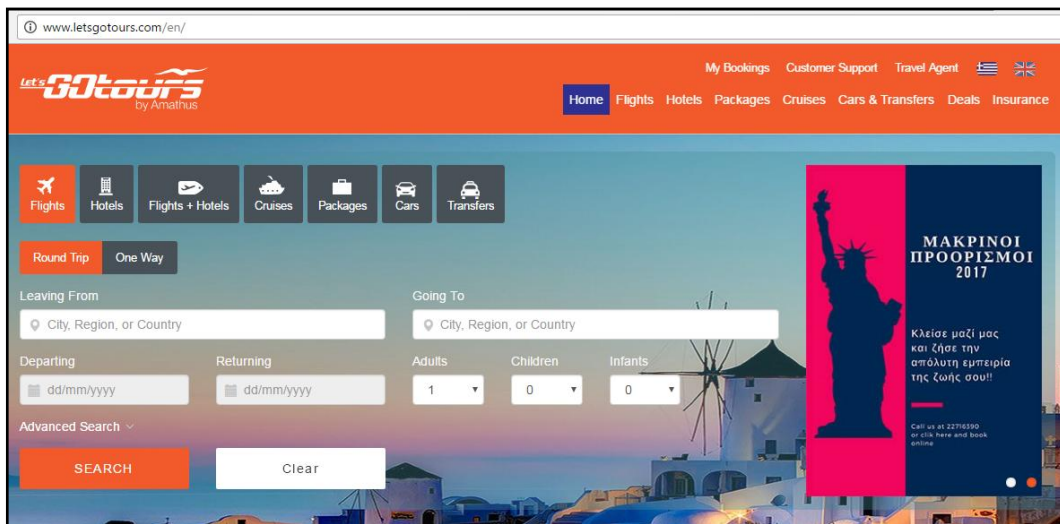
Figure 5: Let's Go Tours Official Website

Currently the website has inline-frames (embedded websites), so statistics on its visitors' traffic are not reliable. As shown in Figure 6, in April 2017, visitors were in total 20,619 of whom 45,3% were returning visitors and 54,7% were new.
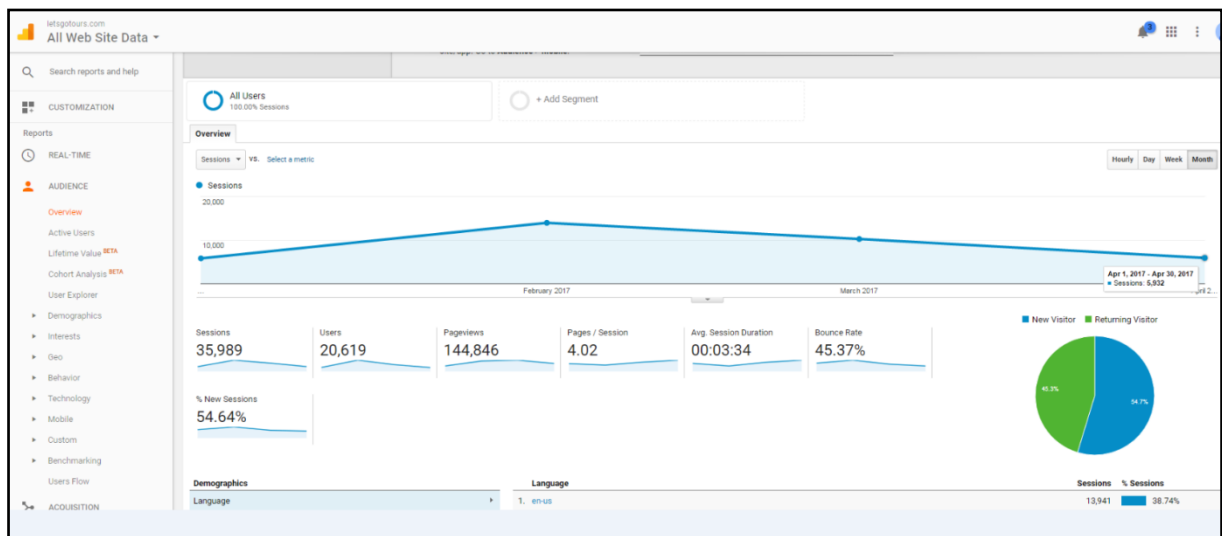
Figure 6: Google Analytics for the website www.letsgotours.com April 2017

A major target of the company is to change the website's design to a more user-friendly interface. The specific master thesis targets to provide an e-marketing plan with website details, therefore contributing to the company's requests. A website, in general, has to reflect both management's and customers' needs. Too much information makes the website more complicated. As researches show, factors that discourage customers to use some travel agencies' websites are long response times, security issues, navigation

28

difficulties and complex design (Cheyne et al., 2005). Let's Go Tours needs to make sure that these problems are not present on its website.

3.5.2 Facebook Page and Other Social Media

In addition, the company aims to have a strong social media presence. Let's Go Tours currently has a Facebook page (see Figure 6), with 23.339 followers and 23.578 likes. The Facebook page name is Let's Go Tours by Amathus and official information about the travel agency's contact details are provided. The company posts mostly its travel destinations and competitions along with some videos about the destinations it offers.

Figure 7: Let's Go Tours Official Facebook Page

As it is already discussed, the Facebook page of Let's Go Tours is not so popular as the top two travel agencies of Cyprus. Statistics show that, there was no new page follows the second week of April and similar results must be avoided in the future (see Figure 8).
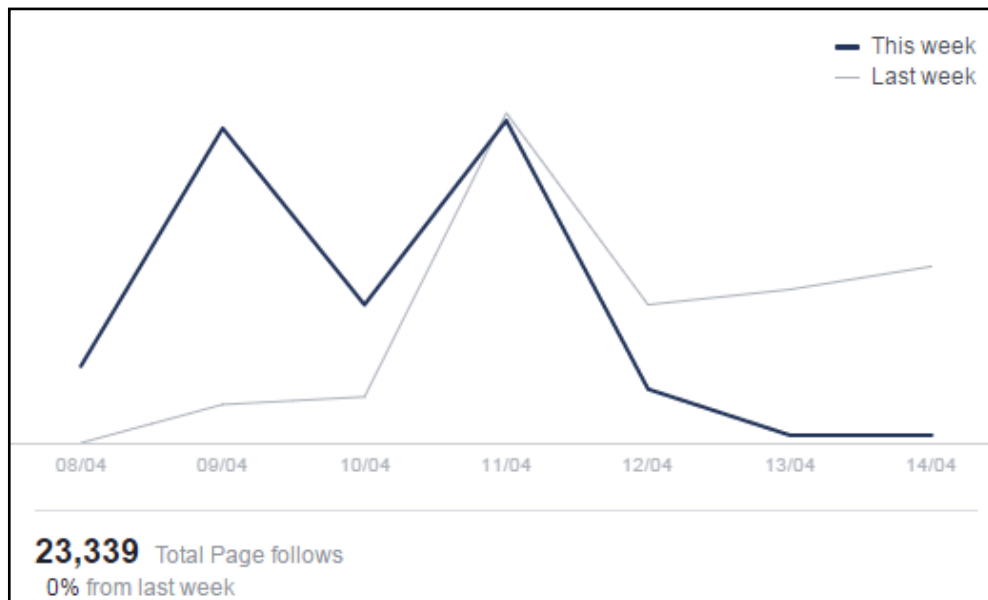
Figure 8: Let's Go Tours Total Facebook Follows

According to Facebook Insights for March 2017, provided by the management of Let's Go Tours, there have been days were daily total reach was 25407 visitors (see Appendix 1). Also, the same source showed that daily likes and dislikes have a range from 3 to 123 likes and 0 to 8 dislikes. The company should take into consideration these data and focus upon those activities that visitors enjoyed the most. In addition, Facebook data showed that link clicks, other clicks and photos are much more appreciated than videos (see Appendix 2). However, this information could be inaccurate if the company does not post videos. In any case, it has to examine which videos are more appealing to visitors. Other relevant information showed that most of Let's Go Tours followers are women aged 25-34 and 35-44 (see Appendix 3). Older people, of both sexes above 55 years old, do not seem to follow Let's Go Tours Facebook in a large scale.

Social media, as researchers mention, have a strong effect on travel agencies and online sales (Inversini et al., 2014). Let's Go Tours' proposed e-marketing plan includes different types of Social Media. Currently, the company does not have an Instagram account whereas its Twitter account has not been updated since 27 of April 2016. Finally, there are only few videos in YouTube that were uploaded in 2016, which have static picture and less than 300 viewers. The website address that is promoted in YouTube (www.amathusetravel.com) is not valid as it is available for sale by a domain company .

Figure 9: Let's Go Tours YouTube Video

Based on the interview conducted (see Appendix 5) to the management team of Let's Go Tours, the company does not participate in travel blogs either. This is an element of e-marketing mix that needs improvement. As it is argued travel blogs is a mean by which travel agencies promote their services, have the opportunity to comment on professional issues and aim participants in making them future customers (Huang et al., 2011). If the company chooses to participate in travel blogs, means that there must be a team dedicated to keep the blog updated.

Having set the targets of the company, Let's Go Tours needs to have a systematic assessment of the relationship between its marketing and its performance. If its promotion does not have impact on its performance and sales, then action must be taken. Recent studies show that travel agencies benefit from the use of marketing performance assessment systems, because the company's strategy is monitored more efficiently (Magno et al. 2017). Sometimes, companies believe that their marketing has effect but in reality it does not and this should be tested.

Using the information presented in this Chapter, Let's Go Tours provides all travel related services, such as reservations, air and sea ticketing, cruises, sightseeing tours

and hotel bookings. It has accomplished to expand its operations in Athens, London and Moscow.

The company's vision related to market share targeting is to be considered the first choice of local travelers and to obtain 10% of the market share. Management has identified additional markets segments that would like to attend and targets an increase of 5% on its sales up until the end of the year.

Company's website and other online media do not enjoy high volume of visitors and can be characterized as insufficient. In addition, the company's management team strongly believes that profits depend on customer satisfaction and high quality of customer service, therefore action must be taken to improve online service.

Chapter 4
Situation Analysis

Chapter 4 presents the macro and micro environment of the company being examined. Marketing tools such as PESTEL and SWOT analysis are used, as well as an analysis of the company's competitors, partners and customers. Let's Go Tours e-marketing plan development needs to overcome challenges that arise either internally or externally.

4.1 Macro Environmental Analysis

Before developing an e-marketing strategic plan that will affect the whole company and its future performance, an investigation to the company's position must be carried out. For this reason and in order to examine the macro-environment of Let's Go Tours, the use of PESTEL analysis is suggested.

4.1.1 PESTEL Analysis

Macro-environmental influences are becoming a major concern for companies as they cannot monitor their impact. The model includes all the systems and structures surrounding the company, which affect all travel agencies. The acronym stands for political, economical, social, technological, environmental and legal environment and it will be examined according to the external internet related influences.

4.1.1.1. Political

The political environment includes various political decisions and actions that government promotes. All kinds of political actions, that have or will have influence in the future running of the business, play a key role to the whole industry. Travel agencies must be well informed about them, comply accordingly and wherever possible exploit

opportunities and funding. A stable political system acts as a catalyst for the growth of all businesses in a country and Cyprus is considered politically stable.

Regarding internet use, Cyprus government and specifically the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism, has announced that steps are being taken for the wider dissemination of e-commerce tools in Cyprus. Through the Program "Business Online", the Ministry aims to assist enterprises to apply information technologies. This is very important for Cyprus companies in general, because they have governmental support for the online growth.

This Program promotes the application of information technology, especially the use of online services and electronic commerce. Companies in this way will increase their productivity, improve their services and reduce costs, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in the European market. The Ministry has commissioned a private firm to conduct an investigation on the domestic market regarding electronic commerce and identify factors that prevent Cypriot businessmen from engaging in electronic commerce and provide online transactions to their customers. Results of 2015 showed that Cypriots prefer online shopping from abroad and not from the domestic market.

The Strategic Plan is based on three pillars, to encourage and support enterprises to promote the use of the Internet and electronic commerce, consumer information concerning safe navigation on the Internet and security measures that should be taken in order to enhance their level of trust in the Internet and e-commerce and promote policy measures associated with the development of electronic commerce.

According to relevant guide that the Ministry has published, online services of local businesses must always be informed and meet all the conditions for the safest possible transactions. At the same time, they must be simple, easy to use and fast. A new co-funded plan is expected to be launched in mid 2017.

4.1.1.2. Economical

The economical environment refers to the economic life of the country as a whole. Unfortunately Cyprus has recently suffered from an additional financial crisis caused by

the country's private banks. This had an impact on citizens' expenditure and consequently travel agencies have been affected. Unemployment has increased dramatically and companies are more skeptical in investments and expansions.

According to the Statistical Service of Cyprus (2016), in 2015, because of the domestic demand, Cyprus returned a positive growth of 1,7% in real terms. For the same year, the unemployment rate declined to 14,9%, whereas the inflation rate fluctuated at -1.5%. The same source shows that in 2015 "*the budget balance recorded a smaller deficit of 1,1% of GDP, while the current account balance was in deficit falling at 2,9% of GDP*" (2016: 8)

The Economics Research Center of the University of Cyprus in his research published in May 2017 (17/2), supports that the real economic activity in Cyprus, is expected to continue in 2017. As we can see in the table below (Table 12), during the first quarter of 2017 (year-on-year), real GDP forecast is projected to increase by 3.5% in the first quarter and by 3.1% in the second quarter. For the third and fourth quarter of 2017, GDP is expected to grow at an average of 3.0%. According to the same source, some of the main factors of the strong growth rates forecasted are: the satisfactory growth in economic activity and employment in Cyprus in 2016 and the improvement of domestic leading indicators in the first quarter of 2017, further improvements in the domestic economic sentiment, the low levels of European interest rates as well as other domestic factors such as positive fiscal performance and declines in the general price level recorded in previous quarters.

YEAR	2017			
FORECAST	3.1			
QUARTER	1	2	3	4
FORECAST (y–o–y)	3.5	3.1	3.1	2.9
Forecast error[2]	0.7	1.2	2.0	2.9
COMPONENTS[3]				
Real economy	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01
Excluding real economy	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03
Real economy & other aspects	3.40	3.03	3.08	2.86
Fiscal	0.32	0.25	0.22	0.22
Prices	0.59	0.48	0.48	0.48
Exchange rates	0.13	0.09	0.08	0.08
Interest rates, spreads	0.80	0.79	0.81	0.66
Stock markets	0.59	0.58	0.59	0.58
Economic sentiment	0.69	0.59	0.66	0.60
Loans, deposits	0.28	0.24	0.24	0.24

Table 12: GDP growth forecasts, forecast errors and contribution of components to forecasts

Even though the economy in Cyprus started to show a positive growth, the market is not economically stable yet. Financial factors have a great impact on how companies work and make their business decisions. For example, interest rates affect cost of capital and thus the extent that a company grows and expands and exchange rates have an impact on products and services exported and imported.

Regarding internet use, people try to avoid any unnecessary expenses and this could be translated in avoiding intermediaries, such as travel agencies. However, there is no sufficient data to support this because outgoing tourism keeps increasing, as mentioned

in Chapter 2. In addition, there are many governmental and European financial schemes that companies can take advantage of, in order to build their online presence.

4.1.1.3. Social

The structure of society, people's perceptions and the demographic criteria related to them clearly affect any business. Having knowledge of demographic change is essential to plan an effective marketing plan because the company's strategy will be formulated based on the market. For example, an aging population worldwide has led many tourism companies aim to attract people of older age, also known as baby boomers. Therefore, demographic factors can be used to forecast demand in future travel preferences and that is a valuable source of information.

However, as it is mentioned previously, there is an increasing turn to independent direct booking from youth generations and this is apparent in Cypriot citizens. Current and future generations are expected to fully move away from traditional travel agencies to online travel agencies.

In addition, everyone's average free time has decreased and responsibilities have increased. In other words, except from the age variable, people seek for quick customer service. If something can be done by them, such as book a trip, they will not spend time asking someone to do it for them.

A recent survey in the Italian market showed that people have a quite negative opinion for travel agencies. More specifically, according to the customers' perceptions: a) travel agencies do not offer better services, b) they care more about the financial part of the consultation than customers needs and c) customers by contacting them bear the additional cost of commission. On the other hand, customers agreed that travel agents' services are less risky and provide higher and professional consultation than searching on their own through the internet (Del Chiappa, 2013).

Travel agencies need to remind customers that they can help them make the right decisions and save time, by bringing value to them. In addition, travel agencies are specialized in travel arrangements and therefore they may offer services that customers

cannot find themselves, such as special air fares, IT Fares and special hotel deals, not available online. Even if it is hard to change this perception, travel agencies need to face this challenge and overcome the rise of self-booking reservations. Customers while surfing through the internet are exposed to a huge amount of information and unclear offers, as a result to spend a lot of time scheduling their travel. Travel agencies have the ability to offer services in all travel-related services and this vale should be justified to the customers.

Let's Go Tours should try and inform customers for its role and services provided. Especially, the new generation who is more tech-knowledgeable is not familiar with the benefits that a travel agency may offer. A relevant survey mentions that there are barriers that need to be reminded to customers when booking their tickets themselves such as inability to locate exact information required, time cost, doubts for safe transactions and information overload (Lang, 2000).

4.1.1.4. Technological

The technological environment also plays a key role in shaping Macro-environment.
According to the Office of Electronic Communications and Postal Regulations (OCECPR, 2016), during 2016, the number of subscribers with broadband access to the internet, in Cyprus, has increased by 17,843 subscribers, which equals to 6,85%, comparing to 2015, resulting 278,483 connections (Table 13). This means that more than a quarter of Cyprus population has access to the internet and consequently access to online information such as travel destinations and travel websites.

Taking the above into consideration, travel agencies and consequently Let's Go Tours, should embrace technology and develop online communication channels with their customers starting with the development of a website. This way they can offer their services to the customers anywhere and at any time.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Market Size	238,510	245,985	253,465	260,873	268,741	276,125	283,989	292,112	299,684	307,135	310,105	313,104	313,104	312,700	313,000
Total Connections	5,998	10,237	18,361	33,799	62,692	101,606	147,276	176,024	194,455	212,149	220,582	228,709	243,611	260,640	278,483
% Penetration	3%	4%	7%	13%	23%	37%	52%	60%	65%	69%	71%	73%	78%	83%	89%
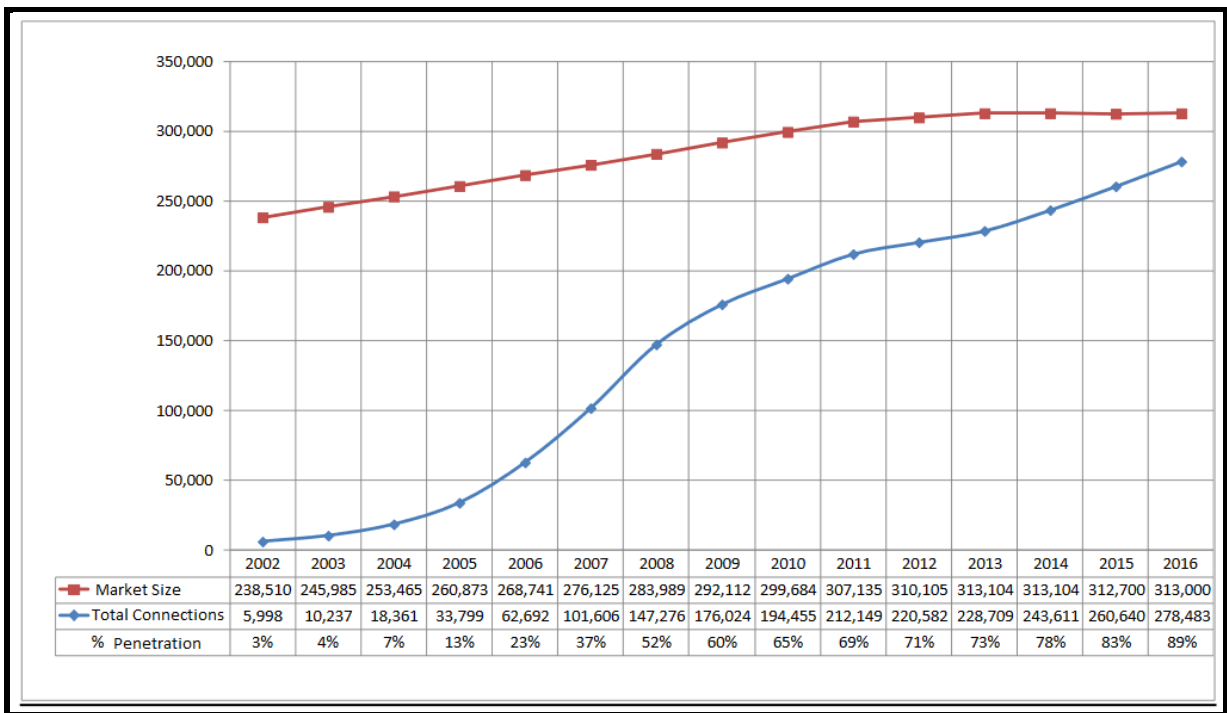
Table 13: Internet Broadband Subscribers in 2016

The trended data of Consumer Barometer with Google, shows that users of smart phones and tablets keep rising the past five years (Table 14). According to the same table, 52% uses the internet for personal purposes, through a web browser or applications, something that shows the need for Let's Go Tours to develop a mobile application as it will be analyzed in Chapter 5 or a website that is mobile-friendly.
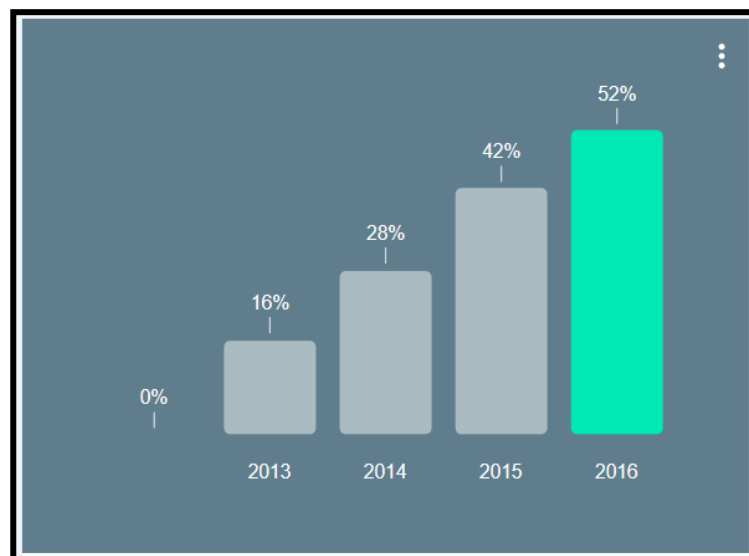
Table 14: Percentage of people who access the internet at least as often via smartphone as computer

Innovations and technology adoption are crucial issues. It has been noticed that many companies invest in online infrastructure and other technologies, leading to better products and services. This is a global phenomenon affecting all travel agencies in the industry. Some of them have already responded to that and some others have not.

For example, innovative travel agencies have obtained a dynamic website for their company and increased the level of quality of services provided. Also, they have developed technologies that provide more innovative services, such as mobile applications which are new ways of communicating with customers. It could be said if the leading travel agencies develop such online tools that other companies cannot copy, then their technological achievements will create barriers to entry the market.

4.1.1.5. Environmental

Environmental issues are also important when PESTEL is studied as the natural environment can affect the demand of customers. Cyprus weather and climate contribute to the enhancement of tourist products and services. With the use of the internet this can be promoted all around the world and share information about other countries too.

Internet can provide information to travelers who wish to shop, have fun in clubs and bars, visit museums, galleries, outstanding architectural buildings, historical sites and monuments by just browsing the destination in the internet. Information collection is extremely easy, even for tourists who wish to visit areas with rich natural beauty, such as lakes, rivers, forests and mountains. Additionally, information is shared on weather conditions, earthquakes, floods, affecting tourists' perceptions accordingly and some time turning them to alternative tourist destinations.

From a different prospective, shifting to e-marketing, by promoting the services and the offers that the company has online and not by using the traditional printed brochures and leaflets, means reduction in paper consumption, thereby helping to save many trees and limit waste.

4.1.1.6. Legal

Travel agencies in Cyprus are regulated by the Tourist and Travel Agencies and Tourist Guides Law (41(I)/1995). Since then, there have been a few law changes, the last one being in 2013.

According to Michael Chambers & CO, e-commerce in Cyprus is regulated by 'Law on Certain Legal Aspects of Information Society Services in Particular Electronic Commerce and Associated Matters of 2004' ('The Electronic Commerce Law'). The aim of the Law 156(I)/2004, as the above firm refers to, is to ensure "*the free movement of information society services between the Republic of Cyprus and the EU/EEA Member States regarding the establishment of service providers, commercial communications, the conclusion of electronic contracts, the liability of intermediaries, out-of-court dispute settlements, codes of conduct, means of legal protection and the cooperation between Member States*". In addition, the specific law regulates also, online information and services, online advertising and marketing, online selling products and services and online entertainment services.

Apart from the above regulations, there is no legal barrier for using the internet for travel agencies, except from the law of Processing of Personal Data (Protection of the Individual) Law of 2001 (138 (I) 2001), which regulates the collection, storage and use of personal data.

4.2 Micro Environmental Analysis

Let's Go Tours also needs to examine the micro-environment, such as the competitors, the partners and the customers. Furthermore, the micro-environment needs to be monitored constantly as it includes elements that affect the production, distribution, promotion and decision-making freedom of the company (Rao, 2011).

4.2.1 Competitors

Companies have to deal competition on many fronts, mainly by firms which offer the same products such as same travel destinations. According to CTO data, in 2017, there are 417 registered travel agencies in Cyprus, proving that the challenge that Let's Go Tours has to overcome will not be easy. As mentioned in Chapter 3, other competitors of

Let's Go Tours are Booking.com, TripAdvisor, Yahoo Travel and Expedia. The company has to examine also, the strategy and the business objectives of its competitors in order to be able to differentiate itself by adding value to the products and the services it provides, as consumers prefer service companies who provide better value than competitors (Rao, 2011).

4.2.2 Partners

Partners have a key role in regards to the products that the company will offer to its customers, as it provides the resources to form the final product, such as the variety of the holiday packages that Let's Go Tours offers. The main partners of Let's Go Tours are the airlines, hotels, car rental companies, travel insurance companies and also other tour operators abroad. The service quality of the partners and the prices for the services they offer can have an immediate effect on the company. For example high prices from its partners in hotel accommodation and air tickets mean high package prices, resulting low demand on the specific package and consequently lower sales and profits. Keeping close and good relationships with the suppliers is a good way to secure quality products and, at the same time, remain competitive.

4.2.3 Customers

Customers are the fundamental resource of income of any business, as a company cannot survive without customers. Knowing its customers, their buying patterns and buying habits, a company can plan better its marketing plan which according to Learn Marketing, will "*aim to attract and retain customers through products, that meets their "wants and needs" and excellent customer service*". For example, assuming that the customers of Let's Go Tours are looking for relatively cheap vacation but with quality hotels and quality service, then the company must "build" its packages according to the needs of the customers so that the customers can buy the offered package.

4.3 SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis is an important strategic tool, used to monitor the internal and external environment of the company. The internal environment refers to the micro-environment, the strengths and the weaknesses of Let's Go Tours; whereas the external

environment refers to the macro-environment, the opportunities and the threats that the company is facing (Keller et al., 2016).

This analysis is necessary for every business because as soon as the elements of SWOT analysis are identified, the business needs to make decisions about them and especially how to handle them. Once SWOT analysis is performed, Let's Go Tours will try to look for opportunities that utilize the company's strengths, look for strategies that address weaknesses through opportunities, look for strategies that use strengths to overcome threats and finally look for strategies which avoid threats and minimize weaknesses' effect, having a more defensive character.

4.3.1 Strengths

Assessing the strengths of Let's Go Tours, the following list of internal factors has been set:

a) Strong brand awareness. Let's Go Tours is a brand name of Amathus Corporation Ltd, part of Lanitis Group of Companies and it enjoys high customer recognition. It is linked to a travel specialty provider and has a well-known reputation for the services provided. Being established for a period of 60 years, local citizens seem to be aware of the company's operations and rely on them. Brand trust in the tourism context is a critical success factor for the company (Hong-Youl, 2016).

b) Specialized personnel with high level of expertise and skills. This is of major importance because it increases not only the customers' confidence to the services provided but also the satisfaction level. Professionals who listen carefully the customers' needs and provide the best possible package deal for them. Not being able to offer what the customers need was never the case. Let's Go Tours personnel is highly trained and motivated to provide.

c) Offering qualitative services and this apparent from repeat customers and recommendation lines. High customer loyalty is a main objective of the company and it is succeeded. As studies show, because travel agencies offer an intangible product, positive reputation reduces customer uncertainty and produce recommending behaviors (Chang et al., 2015).

d) Strong linkages and collaborations to major companies. Strategic allies are a major advantage that Let's Go Tours has. Newly established companies cannot

obtain such partnerships and therefore cannot offer competitive prices to their customers.

e) Diversified customer base. Having customers which are interest in different forms of traveling is primary because it reduces the company's dependency upon one particular market segment. Let's Go Tours mainly has individual customers, groups and honeymooners.

4.3.2 Weaknesses

Let's Go Tours has its own inherent weaknesses, that need to be assessed:

a) Limited adoption of online means and limited implementation of e-services. The company due to the high volume of operations has not managed to have a strong online presence. Even if the company recognizes the value of internet, it did not spend the appropriate time and effort to build its online means. This is crucial because history has shown that successful companies which did not catch up technology developments, such as KODAK and NOKIA, were left out of the market.

b) Aging Website that needs upgrade. The current website of Let's Go Tours has limited traffic and does not support online booking. Anyone who does not call or visit its premises cannot obtain the company's services on its full. This must change immediately, because the company, sooner or later, will see its sales decline.

c) No particular differentiation for the market segment that it currently serves. Let's Go Tours' customers up until now are individuals, organized groups such as schools and corporate clients. All these categories are common to every other travel agency.

4.3.3 Opportunities

Moving to the external influences that Let's Go Tours is facing, the company could be affected by the following:

a) Tourism is still growing and outgoing and incoming travelers keep increasing from year to year. Demand for tourist and travel services therefore is enhanced.

b) Country's political stability and interest to invest in tourism businesses. The role of government is fundamental because it regularly announces investments in developing tourism. There is high potential in tourism industry and presence of investment incentives and funds. Financing tourism activities is a major opportunity that travel agencies have. Let's Go Tours can take advantage of the government's encouragement in tourism growth. Based on the alteration of tourism profile, the company can enrich its existing services, develop new forms of services and fully utilize online tools to enrich travel experience.

c) Many direct flights from and to the island, provided by many airlines. This gives the opportunity to all travel agencies to choose among supplying companies and take advantage of the lowest prices. If most of destinations were offered by monopolists, then travel agencies would have a hard time to decide their partners.

d) Because the country is a very attractive destination and enjoys millions of tourists every year, travel agencies by default are assumed to provide professional and high level services. The general trust in Cyprus travel agencies adds value to each one separately.

4.3.4 Threats

The tourism industry suffers by a lot of threats which inevitably affect all travel agencies. Some examples are:

a) Terrorism fear that decreases confidence in safe travelling. Travelers are not willing to visit specific countries and that makes travel agencies to reconsider and change their plans.

b) Financial recession has affected people's travel habits and the amount of money they are willing to spend. It is possible that travelers choose to travel in cheaper destinations and decrease their expenditure.

c) Intense competition among local travel agencies, which needs to be adequately addressed. Also, availability of foreign travel agents, transforming competition to a global level. As it is declared, the potential of travel sales is so obvious that there has been a huge increase of travel related sites. (Bernstein, J., Awe, S., 1999). As mentioned in Chapter point 4.2.1, Cyprus has 417 travel agents registered in CTO, according to 2017 data.

d) Self-booking decreased dependency on travel agencies. The introduction of online reservations destroyed financially many travel agencies, especially those which kept the traditional way of working. Internet has enabled travelers to do everything by themselves, making the future of all travel agencies in general uncertain (Law et al., 2014).

e) Suppliers of travel related services have expanded their services, covering a greater range of services. For example, some airlines offer both air ticketing and accommodation, such as Ryanair. As a consequence, customers do not need travel agencies to make the necessary preparations for their travel. In addition, suppliers have their own websites and customers skip travel agencies completely. However, it is supported (Christodoulidou et al., 2010) that suppliers by having their own websites do not threat travel agencies. As it is said before, large travel agencies as Let's Go Tours with skilled and experienced personnel can promote suppliers' products much better than suppliers can do themselves. It is also believed that travel agencies, especially the ones who have online infrastructure, can provide better tools to customers than suppliers do, combining different types of tourism products.

f) Travel agencies' services are questioned by customers. There is an increasing perception that the role of travel agencies is worthless. Planning, reserving and travel preparation can be executed by anyone and no special skills are required.

This Chapter presented the company's micro and macro environment. Let's Go Tours needs to take into consideration the external factors such as the financial recession which has affected people's travel habits and the amount of money they are willing to spend, the intense competition on travel agencies, suppliers' trend to expand their services and travel agencies' services being questioned by customers. Internal factors such as the brand name and the well-trained personnel are a valuable asset to the company. By embracing new technological methods and improving its online services and with the continuous training and motivation of its staff, Let's Go Tours can attain its objectives. Tables 13 and 14 show the importance of the improvement of the website of Let's Go Tours as well as the importance for the development of a mobile-friendly website and a mobile application.

Chapter 5
E-Marketing Development Plan

This Chapter focuses on a proposed e-marketing development plan for Let's Go Tours. After the company's situation analysis in the previous chapter, the company's e-marketing objectives, market segments, market targeting and positioning are examined. In particular depth, the company's e-marketing mix is analyzed with innovative ideas for adoption. Chapter 5 analyses in-depth elements mentioned in Chapter 3.

5.1 E-Marketing Objectives

The key step to the development of a successful marketing plan is setting the marketing objectives so that the company can grow its sales and profits (McDonald, 2016). As mentioned in the interview conducted with Let's Go Tours, W*e are considering about our objectives that mostly are to increase our B2C sales and at the same time, each customer that is thinking about vacations or travel, we want him/her immediately to start thinking about Let's Go Tours. Our number one objective: Vacations=Let's Go Tours*"(Appendix 5) .

Based on the products that Let's Go Tours is offering, the objectives of the specific e-marketing plan for Let's Go Tours are:
 ➢ Increase brand awareness where Vacation equals Let's Go Tours
 ➢ Retention of existing customers
 ➢ Attract new customers
 ➢ Increase Business to Customer (B2C) sales
 ➢ Increase B2B sales
 ➢ Increase market share of 10%
 ➢ Increase sales by 5%
 ➢ Increase revenue
 ➢ Increase profit

5.2 Market Segments

A market segment consists "*of a new group of customers who share a similar set of needs and wants*" (Kotler et al., 2016: 266). In order to adjust the marketing plan and group customers who share similar needs and wants together, the segmentation variables that are needed are: geographic segmentation, demographic segmentation, psychographic segmentation and behavioral segmentation.

5.2.1 Geographic Segmentation

Geographical Segmentation is used in order to divide the market into geographical units. In the case of Let's Go Tours, the market can be divided to the five districts of Cyprus, Nicosia, Larnaca, Famagusta, Limassol and Paphos. Data collection, such as the ones in Appendix 4, can be examined in order to plan its future marketing promotion.

5.2.2 Demographic Segmentation

Demographic segmentation is probably the most popular, as it includes segmentation about age, gender, income, occupation, education, generation, religion, family size, nationality and others, that are easy to measure and are associated with consumer needs and wants(Kotler et al., 2016: 271).

5.2.2.1 Gender

Although men and women behave and act differently, travelling concerns both sexes as both feel the need to travel.

According to Cecilia Rodriguez on Forbes magazine: "*The average adventure traveler is not a 28-year old male, but a 47-year-old female*". The same source also points out that 80% of decisions regarding travel and tourism are taken by women.

As shown in Facebook insights of Let's Go Tours (Appendix 3), the majority of Lifetime likes is from women. Knowing that, the company can reach women more easily via media such as Facebook.

5.2.2.2 Age

Consumer's needs and abilities can change according to his/her age. As shown to the IATA table below (Table 15), the working-age population in United Kingdom, makes more air trips than the non-working age population, whereas the highest amount of travelling is noticed at the ages between 25-34, and completes more than 1.6 trips. Based on the company's Facebook insights, its major audience is between 25-34 years old.
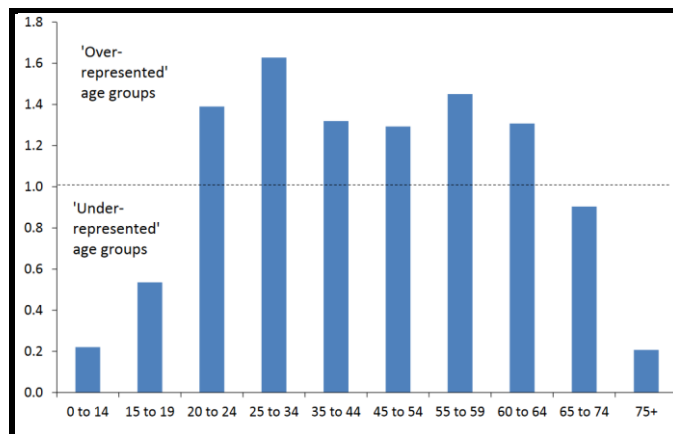
Table 15: Ratio of air passengers by age group to population by age group compared to average

5.2.2.3 Generation

According to Kotler and Keller (2016: .274), "*Each generation or cohort is profoundly influenced by the times in which it grows up, the music, movies, politics, and defining events of that period. Members share the same major cultural, political, and economic experiences and often have similar outlooks and values*''. That means that marketers can aim specific generation groups and develop products and services to match their requirements.

For the purpose of this thesis we will use the generation groups in Figure 10.

Generation	Born between
Baby Boomers	1946 - 1964
Generation X	1964 - 1978
Millennials or Gen Y	1977 - 1994

Figure 10: Generation Groups

Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers tend to travel the most, as they have money and time to travel due to their retirement. Is worth noting that according to the leading luxury travel network in United States of America, Virtuoso, in 2015, 84% of the Baby Boomers have purchased travel online and 72% have researched travel through Online Travel Agencies (OTAs).

Generation X

Travel preferences of the Generation X, depends on family life. Born in the beginning of online bookings the specific group, according to MMGY Global, in United States of America during 2015 an 82% booked travel online and 71% researched their travel through OTAs.

Millenials or Gen Y

Millenials "*are much more likely than other age groups to own multiple devices and multitask while online, moving across mobile, social and PC platforms. They are also more likely to go online to broadcast their thoughts and experiences and to contribute to user-generated content. They tend to trust friends more than corporate sources of information*" (Kotler et al., 2016: 275). According to Virtuoso, 2015, 90% of the Millenials booked their travel online and 87% used OTAs for conducting their research and compare prices. The Millenials is the generation that does a lot of online research about trips before proceeding to a purchase.

5.2.2.4 Income

As mentioned previously, the majority of travelers are the Baby Boomers as they can afford more because of their retirement and the free time that they have. However,

according to Kotler and Keller (2016: 273), although "*income segmentation is a long-standing practice in such categories as automobiles, clothing, cosmetics, financial services and travel, income does not always predict the best customers for a specific product*". The same source states that many marketers tend to go after groups with lower income, as sometimes they discover less competition.

5.2.3 Psychographic Segmentation

In psychographic segmentation consumers are divided in groups according to their personality traits such as self-confidence, intellectualism, innovativeness and leadership in conjunction with key demographics, lifestyle or values (Kotler et al., 2016: 281).

5.2.3.1 Lifestyle

The lifestyle of a team or a person depends on specific trends such as travelling for holidays, visiting friends and relatives, travelling for business, honeymoon travelling and others. According to provisional data of statistical service of Cyprus, based on data of February 2017, 57,1% of tourists arrived in Cyprus for holidays, 23,1% to visit friends and relatives, whereas the 19,6% for business (Table 16).

Purpose and characteristics of tourists	Percentage (%)		
	Feb. 15	Feb. 16	Feb. 17
Purpose			
Holidays	51,9	53,4	57,1
Visiting friends & relatives	29,9	23,8	23,1
Business	17,6	22,7	19,6
Sex*			
Males	51,1	53,1	51,1
Females	48,9	46,9	48,9
Age*			
<20	4,7	5,4	7,4
20-44	44,1	47,3	51,1
45-64	35,4	35,0	33,2
65+	15,5	12,0	7,9
Not stated	0,3	0,3	0,4
* Provisional data for February 2017.			

Table 16: Characteristics of tourists arrived in Cyprus in February 2017

5.2.4 Behavioral Segmentation

Kotler et al. (2016: 281) state that "*in behavioral segmentation marketers divide buyers into groups on the basis of their knowledge of, attitude toward, use of, or response to a product*", meaning that the same product can be bought from consumers for different reasons.

5.3 Market Targeting

After the analysis and the identification of market segmentation, it is important to analyze also the market targeting which consists of a group of buyers who share common needs and characteristics that the company decides to serve. "*Identifying the target market is an essential step in the development of a marketing plan. A target market can be separated from the market as a whole by geography, buying power, demographics and psychographics*" (Investopedia, 2017).

The target groups of Let's Go Tours, are the Baby Boomers, the Generation X and the Millenials, as well as B2B buyers, B2C customers and honeymooners. According to Facebook Insights, lifetime likes by city in Cyprus appear in the following order: Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca, Paphos and then Famagusta (see Appendix 4). This is an indication that Let's Go Tours needs to obtain stronger presence in Paphos and Famagusta whilst it needs to enhance its presence to the rest districts.

The consumers, due to the economic crisis, are demanding mostly low cost prices, so the company tries to keep its prices as low as possible keeping the same time the high quality standards. As shown in Appendix 3, the majority of the audience of Let's Go Tours in Facebook are men and women, 25-34 years old. Therefore the company should create its packages, pricing and others, taking into consideration the specific age group of whom the majority are women.

It is worth noting that effective segmentation criteria should be measurable, substantial, accessible, differentiable, and actionable.

5.4 Positioning

As Devashish Dasgupta states (2010): "*After selecting target markets, the next step involves developing positioning objectives and then developing these into a detailed marketing mix*". Let's Go Tours has a good brand positioning as it is well-known to the consumers for the services it provides as well as for the quality of its services. Given the above it is obvious that the brand positioning of Let's Go Tours is that it offers its services such as travel packages, in the lowest prices but with the highest standards and specifications.

5.5 E-Marketing Mix

It is suggested that the use of internet should be increasingly comprised within the marketing and selling methods of Let's Go Tours. Electronic marketing provides great opportunities to companies seeking further development and exploit benefits such as interactivity, intelligence, integration, individualism and independence of location. Using these principles, the core elements of e-marketing mix will be analyzed and suggestions will be provided further on.

5.5.1. Product

Let's Go Tours does not have its own airlines and hotels, but collaborates with other third parties who do. Besides maintaining control in its agreements and trust with its existing partners, Let's Go Tours needs to regularly seek new suppliers and get familiar with the new tendencies of the market. As it is mentioned, the travel agencies of 21st century face competition from other companies and individuals who book their travels themselves. Let's Go Tours needs to differentiate its products and its marketing in order to maintain future growth and sustainability. The paramount purpose is travelers to choose Let's Go Tours to make their reservations and not use other means.

In order to explore better the nature of the products that Let's Go Tours offers, the "Three levels of product" will be investigated. The three levels of product consist of the core product, the actual product and the augmented product. The three levels of product are important because as soon as marketers identify the core customer value then they can develop their products accordingly.
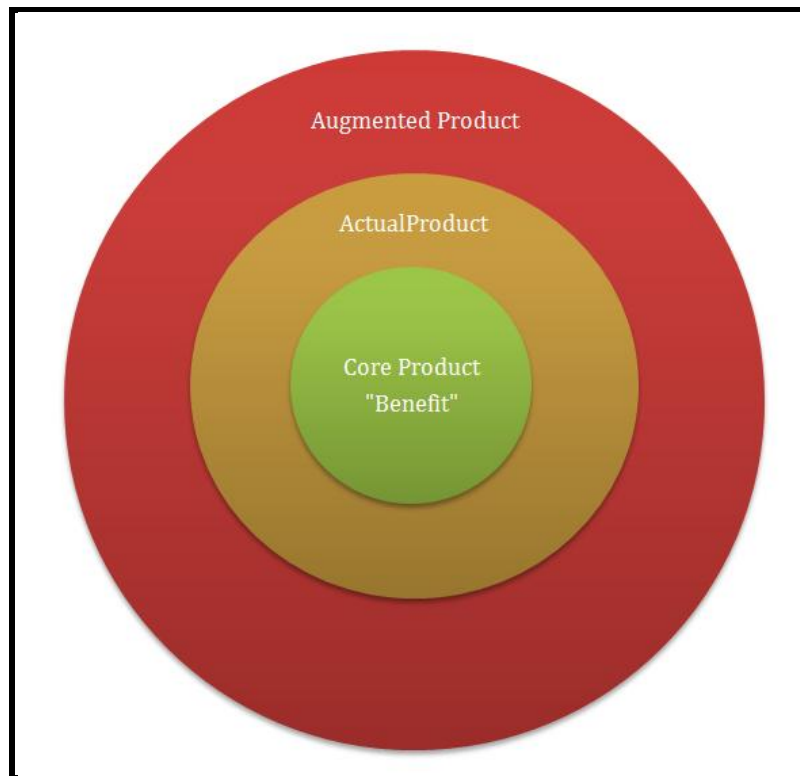
Figure 11: Three Levels of a product

Core product is the first out of the three levels of a product. It refers to the core customer value, and the benefit of the product towards the consumer. According to Maximilian Claesseus, core product answers the questions: What does the consumer actually buys? What does the consumer really seek? For example, the core product of Let's Go Tours could refer to what the consumer can be benefit from, like entertainment, transportation, accommodation and relaxation.

Actual product is the second level of a product and it refers to the actual product where the core intangible product becomes tangible, as it can be used by the consumer. In the case of Let's Go Tours, the actual product refers to what the consumer comes across, like the website, travel consultants, call center representatives and others.

Augmented product is the last out of the three levels of a product. It is the non-physical part of the product. Augmented product is the one that adds value to core and actual product and consequently to the consumers. A few examples of augmented products

that Let's Go Tours could offer are: travel insurance, weather information, pre-booked tickets to museums, theatre tickets and travel guides.

5.5.2. Price

The nature of business that Let's Go Tours operates has two types of main products. The first relates to specific travel packages that have specific prices and the second relates to individuals' travelling plans which are unpredicted and pricing is at first unknown. For both of the above products, Let's Go Tours has adopted the traditional method of Cost Plus Pricing.

Since the airlines have stopped offering commission to the travel agents, in case of individuals that want to book only an air-ticket the company is allowed to charge a service fee depending on the destination (ACTA, 2007).

It could be argued though that the company's market segment is specific and that pricing should not be difficult. However, leisure customers have different needs from each other at different periods and the company cannot predict their plans. This problem prevents the company to form a cost strategy at an early stage. The specific inability is not ideal for any company, as it cannot forecast sales, which is every company's common setback.

As a result, Let's Go Tours takes several actions to minimize its costs and gain a higher profit margin, especially when customers' needs fit the company's products. To succeed that, the company requests large orders of specific travel routes and destinations. Many airlines and hotels respond positively and provide the company with low fares or IT Fares and special hotel rates. In this way, Let's Go Tours successfully obtains decreased costs and manages to use Cost Plus Pricing effectively and to its benefit.

Also, by taking advantage low costs from its suppliers, Let's Go Tours charges its customers lower prices than its competitors, for the same travel route and destination. Therefore, the company still maintains the desired profit and serves more customers. The company takes into consideration the cost of its services otherwise it would not have been profitable and would have faced liquidity problems in the long run. Pricing strategy is currently in line with the company's products and costs are incorporated in to prices.

Moreover, with the use of online means, such as the website, Let's Go Tours will interact immediately with customers. The company will have to add the destinations and travel routes into the website and customers will choose according to their preferences. Prices will be provided in a reasonable time, because all the data will be included in the database and customers will be able to change dates and destinations easy and quickly. Customers will be able to "unlock" special offers when logging into their account and gain special discounts.

In addition to the above, Let's Go Tours will be able to provide special prices to customers who have used its services in the past, according to the history records of their account. The company may offer also subsequent products, such as car rental or a tour to the customer and in the cases that customers accept the company's suggestions "travel points" could be added in their account. A loyalty program is always a good solution when a company wants to have repeated customers and prices could be set accordingly to customers' purchases.

Let's Go Tours could keep its pricing strategy in its online means, by adding an administration fee at the time of booking. There are different options to succeed that, either through setting a specific amount as a fee or through charging a specific percentage on the amount paid. Also, instead of the above, Cost Plus Pricing could also be achieved by embedding the profit on the prices that customers view when booking. In this way, no extra fee will be charged when processing the payment and the customer will know the exact amount of paying from the beginning.

In the case that Let's Go Tours chooses to attend the market segment that wants luxury products, then it should have a different pricing strategy than the standard one. Higher prices would be more suitable for these services because the company aims in providing higher quality and this must reflect customers' perception. Discounting should be avoided because it contradicts the message of high quality. In this way, the company targets customers with higher income therefore it must focus in providing premium services. Discerning clients and bespoke holiday services with high quality airlines and hotels must be charged higher.

5.5.3. Promotion

According to the management of Let's Go Tours, the marketing strategy is to "*expand the company throughout social media in order to get in touch and interact with customers in real time. We are analyzing our past in order to figure out what we have done wrong, try to analyze the data generated weekly through Google analytics and Facebook Insights, try to attract more customers by organizing competitions etc., and posting on a daily basis in order to keep consumers interest. We want to send traffic on our website through any source available*".

It is of great importance that in every offline and online promotional activity, as the ones described below, that the company uses its website address. The goal of the promotional activities should be to inform the customers about the website of the company, to create brand awareness and to inform the potential customers about the shift of the company to online means.

The current promotion of Let's Go Tours could be characterized as limited. The company currently uses more conservative ways of promoting its company and products, such as:

1. High quality travel booklets, brochures and leaflets which are produced annually and seasonally, providing information about the company and its products. The company provides different travel options and packages and this is a way to promote them. All these are printed materials and are available in the company's premises and are also distributed in-house.

2. Participation in National Tourism Exhibitions, such as the one organized by Association of Cyprus Travel Agents every year, Taxidi Exhibition. The company sets a showroom displaying its products with the above materials and with the use of videos. Employees are available to serve customers and answer their questions.

3. Radio announcements when there is a competition or special offer running. Let's Go Tours frequently organizes competitions to attractive destinations such as Rome, London and Prague and publicly announces them through these channels.

4. Printed advertisements in local newspapers and magazines. Again, Let's Go Tours chooses this type of marketing when there is a competition or a special offer.

5. Website and Social Media where they mainly push sales through their Facebook Page with Facebook Campaigns.

6. SMS and mass mailings to a general mail list. Let's Go Tours currently uses MailChimp, one of the largest marketing automation platforms to send its massive newsletters.

5.5.3.1 Offline Promotion

It is suggested that Let's Go Tours should use offline and online promotion channels simultaneously. Even if online marketing will renew the company's image, especially in regards to its shift to online means, the use of offline marketing campaigns are still important. For example, Baby boomers are very keen on travelling. Due to their age, some of them are not in place to use the internet effectively and offline media would be very useful to turn them into customers.

Printed material in magazines and newspapers need to target potential customers with the possibility of turning them to actual customers. For example, current brochures sent to customers may not have the desired outcome as the company does not know if the customers pay attention to these means or if they even bother to look at them. Sending irrelevant information to someone who is not interested has no result.

Window displays

Let's Go Tours already has offices in all major cities of Cyprus. As it is mentioned in previous Chapter, there are some offices outside the country such as in Athens, London and Moscow. The idea of having physical presence is only attractive to older people, who know this way of planning their travelling. However, Let's Go Tours could take advantage of its large premises and have window displays with its website. It is also advisable that a new slogan or logo could be designed featuring the "E-Let's Go Tours" era.

SMS

After collecting useful information about customers, then targeted text messages could be sent. For example, Let's Go Tours could send messages to dancers who are probably interested in travelling to "World Dance Championship". At the end of the SMS, the company's website can be placed as a signature to the text message.

Street Billboards

Street billboards could promote the company's website or even better its mobile application. A smart message such as "Let's Go Tours Mobile Application, First in Cyprus" would attract citizens' attention.

Television Advertisements

Television Advertisements are of major importance when promoting a company or a service that the company provides. As they combine sound, images and movement, they "work well to attract attention, generate awareness and establish preference for products and services, says Lin Grensing-Pophal, author of "Marketing With the End in Mind" (Richards, L., 2017). Target market segments are easy to be identified and therefore a company can use it to its benefit. High cost for creating the advertising spots as well as the high price for promoting a company or a product through television is deterrent factors for a lot of companies. Let's Go Tours, can create television spots using videos from exotic destinations in order to attract customers that want relaxing holidays. In order to achieve its objectives, as mentioned previously, the company should explicitly show the address of its website as part of television advertisement.

Radio Advertisement

Radio advertisement is one of the most common means of advertisement, as comparing to television advertisements, is less expensive. There are two types of radio advertisements, the live reads and the produced spots. Live reads advertisements is when the radio producer reads the advertisement live during his radio show. Produced radio spots is when the advertisement has been recorded, and it is used during the break of the radio show. Let's Go Tours can use radio advertisements in order to promote its packages and also to inform the audience about its website, using the website address during or at the end of the advertisement.

Newspapers and Magazines

Although many newspapers and magazines have shifted to online format, printed advertisements are still relevant. Advertizing in newspapers and magazines was one of the first types of advertisements, and they are still an important tool when used correctly. According to David Klein (2017): "*The general nature of the information inside of newspapers means a wider audience can appreciate the content of your newspaper ad. The more eyes mean the more opportunity for conversions. For magazines however, the fact that magazines typically have niche audiences is actually one of this medium's biggest strengths. Marketers can take a more targeted approach with magazine ads because the readers are very specific. This can potentially increase the influence your ad has on the readers, even though the spectrum is limited* ". Let's Go Tours can take advantage of both printed ways of advertisement to promote its services and also to inform the customers that has shifted to online means, including its website and social media accounts.

Promotional Items

Apart from the traditional promotional items such as pens, calendars and key rings, the company according to its target audience, can use also mouse pads, power banks, car sun shades, USB sticks and others. All promotional items should include the name of the company, the website address and its unique selling points.

Vehicle Signwriting

Placing vehicle wrap not only in company's cars but also on public transport vehicles such as buses with the company's name and web address, is also a good way to create awareness about the company's shift to online means and promote its services.

Word of Mouth (WOM)

Word of Mouth is one of the strongest marketing tools. According to Kotler et al. (2016: 645), "*AT&T found it was one of the most effective drivers of its sales. along with unaided advertising awareness. Some brands have been built exclusively by word of mouth*". Positive WOM from Let's Go Tours existing customers can help increase its clientele.

5.5.3.2 Online Promotion

The company's answer to the question "How effective is the online marketing at this point?" (Appendix 5), is that "*around 85% of B2C that are booking either online or they coming here (cc. company's offices), they had been influenced from our online campaigns*". This shows that the decision of Let's Go Tours to start shifting to online means of promotion has started to pay off.

Even though the company already has a website, it does not seem to be advertised in a great volume. This section refers to the development of an online e-Marketing Plan by analyzing different ways to promote its website and online means by using the website address.

The website with the use of "cookies", can detect customers' views and suggest relevant options. For example, when a user browses mostly vacations in Greek Islands, then automatically these preferences will be spotted and Let's Go Tours will be able to form a customized marketing in such a way that it will fit customer preferences better; for example when a new offer related to Greek Islands is available. The marketing strategy will focus on each customer individually, increasing sales and customer base.

Newsletters and mails

Mass mailings are an option but it could be argued that some customers may not even open their email due to the huge volume of such online advertisements. When customers receive too much information, even if some of it is relevant to their interests, it is possible that they may not notice it due to the huge amount of emails received.

Networking sites

Conventional ways of marketing do not provide interaction with customers and this is a main disadvantage of the company because it lacks useful information. With the use of internet, the company builds a direct relationship with its company and is enable to form its strategy accordingly.

Content Creation

The website of Let's Go Tours, currently lacks information in several products and that according to the management needs to be improved. Jelena Ostrovska (2015), outlines

the importance of content creation by pointing out the necessity of such content as it builds the brand, it establishes the company as an authority in its niche, it is used throughout the entire sales process, it educates and creates awareness around the company's product creating also a longer customer retention.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Internet provides interactivity with customers. Customers may reach the company by searching for it. When people are searching for a keyword, such as "holidays in Greek Islands", the Let's Go Tours website should appear in the first results. SEO is crucial for this part of e-marketing mix and Let's Go Tours needs to ensure that when customers use search engines can easily trace it.

Website analytics

Let's Go Tours through its website could gather intelligent information about current and potential customers. Customers' traffic can be traced and the company will have useful information available about those who enter its website. In addition, except customers' interests (destinations, hotels), the company will have information about the point that customers choose to leave the website. The company makes different decisions when customers leave its website due to unavailability of what they are searching for and different when payment stage is reached. In addition, website analytics determine which part of the website has been visited the most, the time spent, times revisited the same page and other valuable information.

Digital Publisher Placements (Web Banners advertisements)

An important promotional method to promote Let's Go Tours website is by using digital publisher placements, meaning, paid advertisements in the form of banners in specific websites. Placing a banner that includes the name of the company and its website address in web portals like news portals, can increase the reach audience and therefore reach of potential customers. This promotional method is based on Cost Per Thousand impressions (CPM), "a metric used to quantify the display of an advertisement on a web page. Impressions are used in banner advertising, which often pays on a per impression basis" (Investopedia, 2017). Apart from the impressions of such advertisements the cost also depends on the placement of the banner on the website.

Search Advertisement

Another important method of placing online advertisements in order to build awareness effectively is search advertisement, resulting from search engine queries. While consumers are looking for related keywords to the services offered by Let's Go Tours or its competitors, Let's Go Tours will result at the top of the list. This can be achieved by either paid search or by a well-structured SEO that will appear the company in a high ranking position.

AdWords banners

Besides Google AdWords, social media, AdWords banners can also be used to promote a specific offer that Let's Go Tours has. Even if some people already know the company's offers, they can be reminded and re-invited to visit the company's website again.

Facebook - Carousel Advertisements

Carousel is a visual showcase of 10 different images, each one with a different link. Let's Go Tours can take advantage of this type of advertising in order to promote several destinations. Carousel type of advertisements can help the company to divert users to different web pages on the website.

Facebook - Videos

Using videos to promote the destinations is another creative way to attract existing and potential customers. Videos, can target specific audience (age, country) and it is also a way of re-inviting people to the website.

Facebook - Like Campaign

Facebook Like campaign aims to increase the likes of its Facebook Page by targeting audience that might be interested in the specific brand or the products of the brand. More Facebook likes in page shows more trust and consequently more purchases.

YouTube videos and advertisements

YouTube stream videos through the company's YouTube channel are very useful for target marketing. A few seconds video can attract many customers, especially if the video is designed properly. According to internet users clicks, Let's Go Tours will be able

to locate who are interested in travelling and therefore have its videos to draw their attention.

Also, YouTube in-stream videos are another way to build brand familiarity and awareness and also to divert potential customers to the company's website. In Cyprus, in-stream advertising is very effective due to the high-user popularity and low cost per view.

Travel Photography and Video Competition

Checking the quality of services provided cannot be easily achieved, as it is already stated. Travelers when buying a package holiday, have nothing tangible to confirm what they paid for. They are left only with pictures and brochure images. Through social media, Let's Go Tours can announce competitions for its existing customers to share videos and photos of their vacations through the company's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. In this way, future customers will be able to see how many people trusted Let's Go Tours and how satisfy they are and choose Let's Go Tours on their next trip.

Discounting Voucher

Another way to build strong relationships with other companies and therefore attract their customers is to provide vouchers with special discounts. When a traveler makes a reservation through the Let's Go Tours website, he/she can use a promo code as a discount before payment.

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Social media and blogs have also become a useful online instrument to customers as they give the opportunity to customers to interact with each other and view the comments that each one may have upon a specific topic. It is not surprising that customers share their opinion through these channels and four out of ten travelers make the decisions based on the comments of other travelers (Del Chiappa, 2013). The trend, became so popular that obtained a marketing name, called eWOM, taking the traditional marketing method of word of mouth to a new level; the online level.

In the case of Let's Go Tours, videos could be stored and shown to the users through their account on the website. Evidence from previous customers is important to the company's future success. Instead of the traditional brochures with models posing in

popular destinations, images of real customers of the company could be displayed. Visualizing the company's services will increase customer attendance because there is no tangible proof of customer satisfaction and quality services.

Some travel agencies and online travel communities, such as TripAdvisor, have built their success upon customers' experiences (eWOM). Bui et al., (2015: 288) have found that "*Satisfaction with the online travel community is experienced through such characteristics as information sharing, relationship building, and website quality factors, which may increase both the sense of belonging and loyalty*".

5.5.4. Place (Distribution)

Customers in order to attain the services of Let's Go Tours, can visit the company's premises physically, call at the company's call center or directly visit its website and Facebook account.

Having in mind that Let's Go Tours offers services and not tangible products, opening more offices as new distribution points is unnecessary as it would lead to additional costs both in premises, personnel while customers would still have to reach the company physically.

Apart from the online promotion methods mentioned in Section 5.5.3.2, the available and potential distribution channels of the company's products will be analyzed below.

5.5.4.1 Website

Websites are the most basic online tool that a company may develop nowadays as it is available to the customers 27/4. If a company does not have website, then it is possible that customers will not trust it and will be unconfident for the services it provides. Let's Go Tours already has a website that provides information about its services, but it currently does not support proper online bookings. Also, its website is considered unfriendly to users therefore it needs immediate improvement and update. Research states that websites need to be easy to use for customer to trust the information published in them (Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012) and if this does not change, the Let's Go Tours website will soon become useless.

Travel agencies are called to adopt new and advanced technology methods and keep upgrading their systems to remain in business and improve overall performance and efficiency. The goal of advertising activities is to divert people to the company's website, in order to create awareness and generate bookings through the booking engine of Let's Go Tours.

Website upgrade

The company's website needs immediate upgrade to provide online booking for all the providing services from all browsers. Services must be provided online because traditional way of business sooner or later will cease. The company's website needs to operate efficiently in all types of electronic devices, desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets, and smart phones. Being able to connect with Let's Go Tours anytime and anywhere is fundamental. Therefore, company can also benefit from a website that is user-friendly. New features in the website such as hotel maps and distance from major attraction could also be an added value of the website.

Online chat

Online chat with an experienced travel consultant enlarges interactivity between customers and company, offering personalized services while at the same time it eliminates the need of visit the company's offices.

Website review posted in the website

Customer feedback is always useful for company improvement. Munoz –Leiva et al., (2012: 880) have said that "*Among the various actions that companies should take in light of this new web generation are listening to customer feedback, building a direct relationship with them to determine their needs firsthand, responding to constructive criticism of all kinds (positive or negative) and taking the appropriate measures to resolve complaints and follow through on negative comments from customers".* Let's Go Tours by setting a tab with Customer Review could take advantage of the above and have the opportunity to reply when necessary.

5.5.4.2 Mobile Application

By shifting to new promotional tools, Let's Go Tours can develop a mobile application as it is a tool that will differentiate the company from its competitors and add value to its services, as no other travel agency owns a mobile application. The company is already convinced that through internet more income is to be generated and financial viability will be succeeded. Sheng Wei Lin (2017: p.132) states that "*The traditional travel market has been revolutionized by the advent of the Internet, and mobile technology applications can create a new marketing and communication platform to help firms survive in such a competitive environment. Therefore, continuous improvement required products and services to increase loyalty customer to the product, as well as attracting new customers*".

Researchers say (Del Chiappa, 2013) that travelers use the internet for two reasons, to acquire information and to buy tourism products and services, dividing them to lookers and bookers. The mobile application will be able to to provide information to travelers rather than making online bookings. Also, Let's Go Tours could provide access to its mobile application, either only to those who have booked a ticket through it or to be publicly available.

Mobile applications are more familiar to innovation adopters and mostly to the Millennials (born from 1996 onwards). There is no doubt that this is a strong marketing channel for a company. However, it is easy to adopt a mobile application but it is difficult to adopt the right one; the one that meets customers' needs. In addition, due to the existence of thousands of applications customers may not choose to use it if it does not add value to them.

Visa regulations

Almost each country has different entry requirements. Let's Go Tours' mobile application could show every country's visa regulations such as authorized duration spent in the country, visa types, visa costs and official way to have a visa approved, by just simply choosing the country.

Taxes

Different types of taxes may be applicable to different countries. It is even possible that different cities in a country may have different taxes, or even tax policies. For Example

Cyprus VAT reaches up to 19% and in Greece up to 23%. In these countries VAT taxes are incorporated in products, whereas there are countries such as USA that VAT taxes are excluded from products and paid at the time of the transaction. Such information is very useful to travelers, which may be surprised if they lack this knowledge.

Maps

When entering a country, it is suggested that Let's Go Tours mobile application shows the country's map. This is possible with the use of GPS systems. Travelers in this way will identify monuments and other tourist attractions closed to them. Bars, restaurants and shops could be also shown.

Currency

Country's main currency and currency converters could be also added in Let's Go Tours' mobile application. Also, currency exchange points could be provided with contact details such as address and phone. Travelers often need to exchange money and this would be very helpful. These points could be added in the application's map to facilitate travelers even more. Actually, the company could make profits from advertising these sellers.

Weather

Information about weather conditions is definitely one of the first things that travelers check before visiting a country. Especially for those who travel with children, such information is very useful. Let's Go Tours' application could be connected with a governmental or other provider and inform its users about weather temperature and projections.

Local habits

Different countries have different habits. Usually customers will not really make a research for local habits and traditions when visiting another country. The suggested mobile application could provide some of them to its users as additional knowledge.

Tourist attractions

Although customers may search for these before traveling, the mobile application could provide a list of the main tourist attractions that the city they are visiting has. Pictures

and other information could be added, such as address, phone number, website, entrance cost.

Basic language translations

Another suggested service that Let's Go Tours' mobile application could have is commonly used phrases translated. Saying "Thank You" to someone's own language is always appreciated and simple phrases like this could be included.

Let's Go Tours Management admits that the company feels comfortable with traditional ways of communicating with customers, because until now they were successful. Nevertheless, the company is willing to take the initiative and train its employees to assist its customers through the website and other online means. It has been understood that new generations have different habits and that physical customer service cannot be kept in the future. New technologies must be employed and the website should be promoted. One of them is the development of a strong online presence and Social Media. The company must strengthen its presence in Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Chapter 6
E-Marketing Budget

The company's budget for the e-marketing plan will be the decisive factor for its adoption. This Chapter presents the Let's Go Tours digital marketing budget and the market's trend related to that. In addition, website budget and media plan budget are more explanatory in monetary terms, providing useful information for the implementation of the proposed marketing plan.

6. 1 Digital Marketing Budget

According to the management of Let's Go Tours, e-Commerce Sales Executive of Let's Go Tours, argues that "electronic marketing is our first priority because nowadays, a travel agency without an online system cannot exist and will probably "die" in the next 2 to 3 years".

Budget is a crucial part for implementing an e-marketing plan because it determines if the plan will be or will not be carried out. It is common that companies wish to invest in their promotion activities but sometimes they do not, due to budget constraints. This Chapter presents estimated costs that the proposed e-marketing plan may have, as an indication to Let's Go Tours. However, the research for this dimension is limited as almost all Cyprus-based e-Marketing companies asked, needed exact information about the company and its plans. This is rational because the above-mentioned companies would have to spend time to provide such information, which inevitably would cost them effort and money.

It can be argued that the cost of developing an online presence discourages travel agencies because firstly they might not afford it and also because they must keep it updated and promote it to have a positive effect (Barnet et al., 2002). The same source

shows that most travel agencies spend maximum $2,000 on their websites, which highlights their inability to invest in online technologies.

6.1.1 Digital Marketing Budget Trends

Before the company decides on which online channels it will invest to, it is important to study the digital trends of the market. Table 17 is based on a survey conducted by Marketing Charts, with data from Econsultancy, Gartner and Adobe. The table includes responses from 3,347 company marketing professionals around the world.
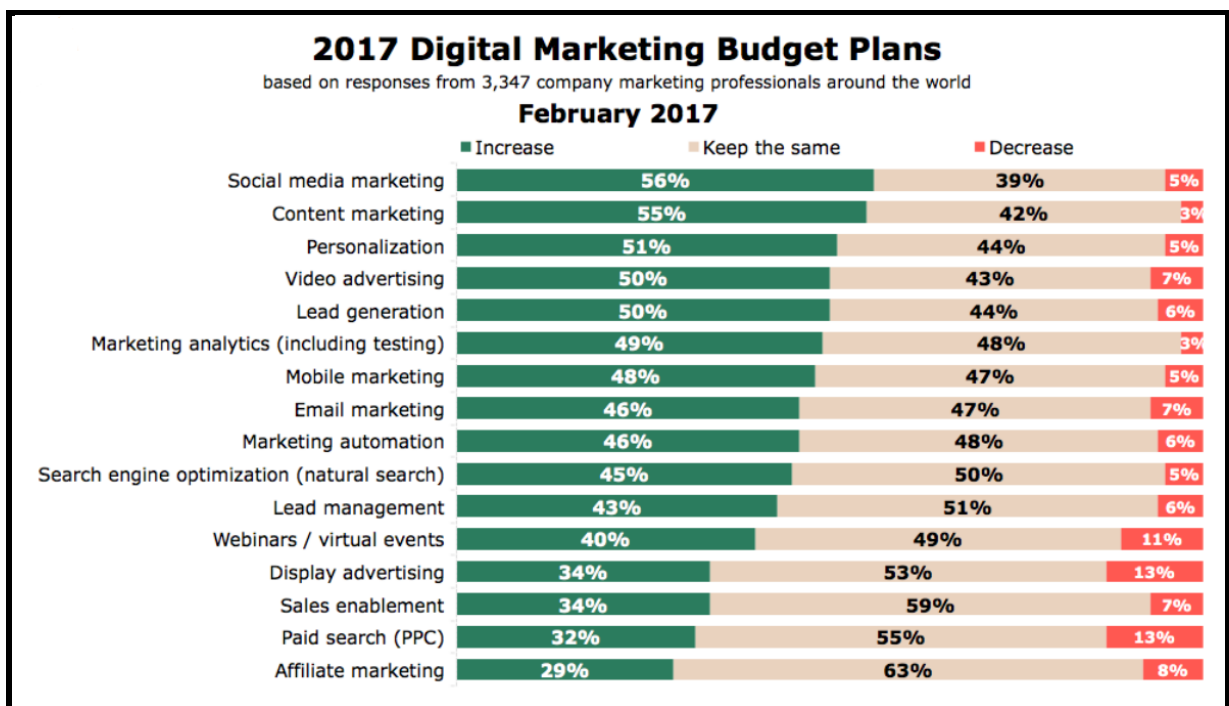
Table 17: 2017 Digital Marketing Budget Plans

Given the data in Table 17, among the most popular channels that marketers are going to invest in 2017, are social media marketing (56%), content marketing (55%), mobile marketing (48%), email marketing(46%), and search engine optimization (natural search -45%). The same source reveals, that spending in offline advertising has a positive impact of 43% this year.

The statistics in the above table can help Let's Go Tours decide the channels through which it can promote its website and its products as well as the amount of money that the company will spend. As we can see, social media marketing is essential, therefore, it will be wise to invest more in social media.

6.1.2 Measuring Return on Investment (ROI) from Digital Channels

A recent report from Econsultancy and Oracle Marketing, issued by Marketing Charts (2017), reveals the most confident channels of the marketers in measuring for ROI (Table 18). According to the analysts, "*without the ability to measure channels, ROI cannot be proved to management and without proof, decision makers are unlikely to increase budgets.*"

Company Marketers' Ability to Measure ROI From Digital Channels
based on a survey of close to 588 respondents (73% based in Europe), 57% of whom are client-side marketing professionals

"How do you rate your ability to measure ROI from the following digital channels or disciplines?" — **May 2016**

Channel	Good	Okay	Poor
Paid search (PPC)	50%	33%	17%
Email marketing (for acquisition)	48%	33%	19%
Email marketing (for engagement/retention)	45%	35%	20%
Affiliate marketing	36%	29%	35%
Lead generation	32%	43%	25%
Marketing automation	26%	43%	31%
Webinars / virtual events	25%	36%	39%
Marketing analytics (including testing)	24%	45%	31%
Display advertising (for acquisition)	24%	43%	33%
Lead management	23%	41%	36%
Data management	23%	39%	38%
Display advertising (for engagement/retention)	21%	42%	37%
Social media investment (for acquisition)	19%	45%	36%
Search engine optimization (natural search)	18%	56%	26%
Mobile marketing (for acquisition)	18%	45%	37%
Content marketing	17%	41%	42%
Social media investment (for engagement/retention)	17%	46%	37%
Mobile marketing (for engagement/retention)	15%	49%	36%
Personalization	14%	44%	42%
Video advertising	11%	40%	49%
Sales enablement	9%	53%	38%

Table 18: Company Marketers' Ability to Measure ROI from Digital Channels

Findings from the above survey, show that there is only one channel that half of the respondents feel confident to invest to so that ROI is measured and that is paid search (50%), leaving behind, social media investment (19%) and search engine optimization natural search (18%).

Taking into account the two tables above (Table 17 and 18), Let's Go Tours can invest in social media marketing, as the consumers keep a positive attitude towards social media networking, and mobile marketing although ROI cannot be measured accurately. It must also invest in paid search and email marketing for acquisition, engagement and retention, where ROI is more easy to measure.

6.2 E-Marketing Budget

Usually, the total amount that will be used for the e- Marketing budget depends on the percentage of the sales. According to the management of Let's Go Tours, the company is willing to invest €50,000 on advertisement.

6.2.1 Website Budget

Regarding the existing website of Let's Go Tours, the company is willing to invest €30,000 for its development (adding new features and others) and €10,000 for its advertisement. Website maintenance fee is estimated at €500.00 each year and usually includes bug fixes, updating the Customer Management System (CMS) into a new version and others.

Promotional Method	Cost
Online Promotion	€ 17,500.00
Promotional Items	€ 1,000.00
Brochures and other advertising documents	€ 5,000.00
Radio, TV advertisements and SMS	€ 15,000.00
Billboards	€ 2,000.00
Exhibitions	€ 5,000.00
Public Relations	€ 3,000.00
Photo Shooting	€ 500.00
Total Amount	**€ 50,000.00**

Table 19: Let's Go Tours advertising budget

Table 19 presents how Let's Go Tours allocates at this point the cost for promoting its website and services. It is worth noting that currently the company is not interested to invest in video production in order to promote the website and its services.

Given the above, the company is willing to invest the most on the traditional promotional methods such as radio television advertisements and SMS and online promotion.

6.2.2 Media Plan Budget

The pricing of the media plan depends on the advertisements and the campaigns that the company will want to run. Based on the information that the company has provided

in Table 20, the company is willing to invest €17,500.00 in online promotion for its website and products.

A suggested proposition for a media plan of twelve months, targeting men and women in Cyprus between 20-65 years is presented in Table 20. The online media plan includes Google AdWords (YouTube in-stream video advertisements, AdWords banners and search Ads) and Facebook advertising (Website clicks, Carousel ads and Like Campaign) and Digital Publisher Placements (website banners) on specific websites.

The goal of the advertising activities below are to deliver people direct to the booking website in order to create brand awareness, generate bookings and promote the services that the company provides.

Online Promotional Method	Monthly Budget
Google AdWords	
Paid Search Ads	€300.00
AdWords Banners - Display campaign	€300.00
YouTube Video Advertisements	€150.00
Facebook	
Website Clicks (4 Advertisements)	€150.00
Carousel Advertisements	€100.00
Like Campaign	€150.00
Digital Publisher Placements	
Website Banners	€ 310.00
Total per Month	€ 1,460.00*
Total per Year	€17,500.00
* round-up	

Table 20: Online Media Plan Budget

E-marketing campaigns are important for every business. In the case of Let's Go Tours, a targeted and well-structured campaign can be successful in means of creating brand awareness and informing the audience regarding the shift of the company towards online means such as its website.

By examining the world trends of digital marketing, the company can create its own e-marketing strategy according to its needs by focusing on the most important promotional methods.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

The global financial crisis has led consumers to decrease unnecessary expenses and search ways to receive the products and services needed as cheap as possible. Many people have been affected financially, also having an impact to travelers who want to visit another country. Technology development though gave many solutions to travelers such as price comparison and direct online booking. Researchers say that when booking their vacation, consumers nowadays avoid intermediaries such as travel agencies and choose to do it themselves. In addition, many airlines, shipping companies and hotels have developed their own websites and accept reservations through Internet, making the need of travel agencies even less.

The challenge of this master thesis was to produce an e-marketing plan for a Cyprus company which operates in the specific sector, called Let's Go Tours, in order to sustain future growth and overcome competition. Technological advances, besides affecting consumers and suppliers, have also caused noticeable changes to how travel agencies operate. Managers need to ensure the proper and continuous training of their personnel and the adoption of online means to ensure high quality services are offered.

Examining the macro and micro environment by conducting PESTEL and SWOT analysis is essential in order to better understand all the systems and structures that surround the company. As mentioned in Chapter 4, with the use of SWOT analysis, the company will try to look for opportunities that utilize the company's strengths, look for strategies that address weaknesses through opportunities, look for strategies that use strengths to overcome threats and finally look for strategies which avoid threats and minimize weaknesses' effect in order to have a more defensive character.

The competitive edge of 21st century and available technology show evidence that tourism industry keeps growing and changing. Let's Go Tours does not need to promote its name because customers already recognize what the company serves.

By identifying the market segments and proceeding to targeted marketing, the company can develop a more concrete online and offline strategy on how to proceed with its operations and its promotional channels.

A focused e-marketing campaign is suggested to attain the company's objectives, through a dynamic website, a mobile application online and social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Having a strong online presence, the company will be able to customize travels more effectively according to its customers' interests and requests and maintain future growth.

Travel agencies need to take dynamic measures to become customers' trustees again. Let's Go Tours, needs to strengthen its marketing strategy and it is proposed that such a success could be achieved, mostly through its website. By upgrading and improving the existing website the company can enhance brand awareness and therefore generate bookings directly through the booking engine of Let's Go Tours.

Let's Go Tours needs to adopt new technologies in its operations and remind to customers the value it offers. In general, as researchers found (Yaman et al., 2001, p.139) "*Travel agents are under substantial pressure at present to review and redefine their roles, as their basic reason d' être is being questioned, particularly due to the opportunities promised b new technologies for travelers to deal more directly with tourism product suppliers*".

The evaluation of the results from the proposed offline and online promotional propositions as well as the application of the suggested media plan, can give a clear image on which promotional channels Let's Go Tours should invest.

The company can also benefit by the creation of a mobile application as it will be the first travel agency in Cyprus to develop such an application and therefore it can enjoy high publicity. In order to develop a mobile application, a more detailed investigation should be made, towards the functionality of such an application as well as the features that it will include.

References

Barnett, M., Standing, C., (2000) *Repositioning travel agencies on the Internet*, Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 143-152

Bernstein, J., Awe, S., (1999) *Wired travelers: Travel and Tourism Web Sites*, Reference Services Review, Vol. 27, Issue 4, pp. 364-375

Bigne, E., Aldas, J., Andreu, L., (2008) *B2B services: IT adoption in travel agency supply chains*, Journal of Services Marketing, Vol. 22 Issue: 6, pp.454-464

Bilotkach, V., Rupp, N., *Buyer Subsidies in Two-Sided Markets: Evidence from Online Travel Agents* In the Economics of International Airline Transport. Published online: 07 Oct 2014, pp. 339-374

Bui, M., Jeng, D., Lin, C., (2015) *The importance o Attribution: Connecting Online Travel Communities with Online Travel Agents*, Cornell Hospitality Quarterly, Vo. 56, Issue 3, pp. 285-297

Business Online, (2017), [Online] Available at: http://www.go-e.mcit.gov.cy [Accessed: 20 April 2017]

Chambers, M., & Co., LLC. 2017. *E-Commerce Law in Cyprus.* [Online] Available at: http://cypruslawfirm.com/e-commerce-law-in-cyprus/#_ftn4 [Accessed: 8 February 2017].

Chang, K., (2015) *How travel agency reputation creates recommendation behavior*, Industrial Management & Data Systems, Vol. 115 Issue: 2, pp.332-352

Cheyne, J., Downes M., Legg, S., (2005) *Travel agent vs internet: What influences travel consumer choices?* Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 12 Issue: 1, pp. 41-57

Christodoulidou, N., Connolly, D., Brewer, P., (2010) *An examination of the transactional relationship between online travel agencies, travel meta sites, and suppliers*, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 22 Issue: 7, pp.1048-1062

Consumer Barometer with Google, (2017), *Trended Data*. [Online] Available at:
https://www.consumerbarometer.com/en/trending/?countryCode=GR&category=TRN-NOFILTER-ALL [Accessed: 16 May 2017]

Cyprus Tourism Organization (CTO), *Annual Report 2014*. [Online] Available at:
http://www.visitcyprus.biz/wps/portal/b2b (Accessed: 14 April 2017)

Dasgupta, D., (2010) *Tourism Marketing*, Pearson India, Safari Books Online

Del Chiappa, G., (2013), *Internet versus travel agencies: The perception of different groups of Italian online buyers*, *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 19 Issue: 1, pp.55-66

Deng, S., Lawson, R., Moutinho, L., (2000) *Travel agents' attitudes towards automation and the delivery of service*, Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, Vol. 12 Issue: 4, pp.60-72

Eurostat, Statistics Explained (2016) *Tourism trips of Europeans*.[Online]
Available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/Tourism_trips_of_Europeans [Accessed at 15 March 2016]

Eurostat, Statistics on ICT Use in Tourism (2016) [Online] Available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics_on_ICT_use_in_tourism [Accessed: 25 March 2017].

Ebiz, The Business Guide, Top 15 Most Popular Travel Websites. [Online] Available at:
http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/travel-websites [Accessed: 05 May 2017].

Claessens, M., (2015) *Three Levels of Product - Core Value, Actual Product, Augmented product.* [Online] Available at: https://marketing-insider.eu/three-levels-of-product/ [Accessed: 25 May 2017]

Cyprus Tourism Organization (CTO), *Tourism Strategy 2011-2015*. [Online] Available at: http://www.visitcyprus.biz/wps/portal/b2b [Accessed: 10 April 2017].

Facebook Business, Marketing on Facebook. [Online] Available at: https://www.facebook.com/business/overview [Accessed: 20 April 2017].

Goldberg, B. 2015. *The truth about how different generations travel*.[Online]
Available at:
http://blog.virtuoso.com/uncategorized/the-truth-about-how-different-generations-travel/
[Accessed: 15March 2017].

Hatton, M., (2003) *Redefining the relationships: The future of travel agencies and the global agency contract in a changing distribution system*, Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 10 Issue: 2, pp. 101-108

Harmon, P., (2014) *Business Process Change: A Business Process Management Guide for Managers and Process Professionals*, 3rd ed.

Hong-Youl, H., (2016) *The evolution of brand personality: an application of online travel agencies*, Journal of Services Marketing, Vol. 30 Issue: 5, pp.529-540

Huang, L., Yung, C., Yang, E., (2011) *How do travel agencies obtain a competitive advantage? Through a travel blog marketing channel*, Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 17 Issue: 2, pp. 139–149

Inversini, A., Masiero, L., (2014) "*Selling rooms online: the use of social media and online travel agents*", International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 26 Issue: 2, pp.272-292

Investopedia (2017), *Target Market* [Online] Available at:
http://www.investopedia.com/terms/t/target-market.asp [Accessed: 25 May 2017]

Investopedia (2017), *Cost Per Thousand (CPM).* [Online] Available at:
http://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/cpm.asp [Accessed: 20 April 2017]

Klein, D. 2017. *The Benefits of Newspaper Advertising vs. Magazine Advertising.*[Online]
Available at: http://www.macromark.com/blog/the-benefits-of-newspaper-advertising-vs-magazine-advertising
[Accessed at 22 February 2017].

Kulwicki, A. 2014. *Travel Research: 2015 Boomer Travel Trends.*[Online]
Available at:
http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/surveys_statistics/general/2014/AARP-2015-Boomer-Travel-Trends-AARP-res-gen.pdf
[Accessed: 10 January 2017].

Ostrovska. J., (2015). *5 Reasons Why Content Creation is Important* [Online] Available at:
http://www.jelenaostrovska.com/5-reasons-content-creation/ [Accessed: 26 May 2017]

Kotler, P., Keller, L. K., (2016). *Marketing Management.* England: Pearson

Lang, T., (2000) *The effect of the Internet on travel consumer purchasing behaviour and implications for travel agencies, Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 6 Issue: 4, pp. 368-385

Law, R., Leung, R., Lo, A., et al, (2015) *Distribution channel in hospitality and tourism: Revisiting disintermediation from the perspectives of hotels and travel agencies*, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 27 Issue: 3, pp.431-452

Law, R., Leung, K., Wong, R., (2004) *The impact of the Internet on travel agencies*, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 16 Issue: 2, pp.100-107

Leonidou, L., Palihawadana, D., Theodosiou, M., (2006) *An integrated model of the behavioural dimensions of industrial buyer-seller relationships*, European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 40, Issue: 1/2, pp.145-173

Learn Marketting. Net. *Macro Enviroment.* [Online]

Available at:http://www.learnmarketing.net/microenvironment.htm

[Accessed: 10 March 2017].

Let's Go Tours, *Who We Are*. [Online] Available at:
http://www.letsgotours.com/en/corporate/8/who-we-are [Accessed: 10 March 2017].

Lin, S., (2016) *Identifying the Critical Success Factors and an Optimal Solution for Mobile Technology Adoption in Travel Agencies*, International Journal of Tourism Research, Volume 19, pp. 127–144

Loureiro, A., (2016) *Redefining travel commerce: the Travelport perspective*, Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes, Vol. 8 Issue: 6, pp.699-704

Marketing Charts, (2017), *2017 Marketing Budget Trends, by Channel*. [Online] Available at: http://www.marketingcharts.com/online/2017-marketing-budget-trends-by-channel-74715/ [Accessed: 25 May 2017]

Marketing Charts, (2017), *Which Digital Channels Are Marketers Most Confident in Measuring for ROI*. [Online] Available at:
http://www.marketingcharts.com/online/which-digital-channels-are-marketers-most-confident-in-measuring-for-roi-67300/ [Accessed: 25 May 2017]

Marketing Teacher Ltd. 2000 – 2017. *Answer Three Levels of a Product.*[Online]
Available at:
http://www.marketingteacher.com/answer-three-levels-of-a-product/
[Accessed at 28 March 2017].

McDonald, M., 2016. *Malcom McDonald on Marketing Planning: Understanding Marketing Plans and Strategy.* Kogan Page, 2 ed. Kogan Page, Safari Books

Magno, F., Cassia, F., Bruni, A., (2017) *Adoption and impact of marketing performance assessment systems among travel agencies*, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 29 Issue: 4

Morgan, M., Trivedi, M., (2007) *Service intermediaries: a theoretical modeling framework with an application to travel agents*, Journal of Modelling in Management, Vol. 2 Issue: 2, pp.143-156

Munoz-Leiva, F., Méndez, J., Fernández, J., (2012) *Generalising user behaviour in online travel sites through the Travel 2.0 website acceptance model*, Online Information Review, Vol. 36 Issue: 6, pp.879-902

Ozogul, G., Baran G., (2016) *Accessible tourism: the golden key in the future for the specialized travel agencies*, Journal of Tourism Futures, Vol. 2 Issue: 1, pp.79-87

Pearce, B. 2014. IATA: *The shape of air travel markets over the next 20 years.* [Online]
Available at:https://www.iata.org/whatwedo/Documents/economics/20yearsForecast-GAD2014-Athens-Nov2014-BP.pdf . [Accessed: 10 February 2017].

Perramon, J., Bagur-Femenias, L., Amat, O., (2015) *Quality practices in travel agencies: A mediating factor in non-financial indicators of advanced information systems*, Industrial Management & Data Systems, Vol. 115 Issue: 7, pp.1325-1340

Rao, K. M., (2011) *Services Marketing.* 2ed. Pearson India [Online] Safari Books

Richards, L. (2017) *What Are the Advantages of Advertising on TV?* . [Online]
Available at:http://smallbusiness.chron.com/advantages-advertising-tv-3385.html
[Accessed: 12 March 2017].

Rodriguez, C. 2014 *Girls Guide to Paris Shows That In Travel, Women Are On Top.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/ceciliarodriguez/2014/04/21/paris-
one-girls-guide-to-leveraging-womens-travel-spend/#487106a03d96 [Accessed:
02 March 2017].

Statistical Service of Cyprus, *Statistical Abstract 2015, General Statistics*, Series I, Report
No. 61[Online], Available at:
http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/All/5B26588F9EB90E4DC22575
3E003449AF/$file/ABSTRACT-2015-EN-281216.pdf?OpenElement [Accessed: 24
May 2017]

University of Cyprus, (2017). *Economic Outlook: Economics Research Center*, Issue 17/2
[Online] Available at:
https://www.ucy.ac.cy/erc/documents/EconomicOutlook_May17.pdf [Accessed: 27
May 2017]

Theodosiou, M., Katsikea, E., (2012) *Antecedents and performance of electronic business
adoption in the hotel industry*, European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 46 Issue: 1/2,
pp.258-283,

Wei Lin, S., (2017) *Identifying the Critical Success Factors and an Optimal Solution for
Mobile Technology Adoption in Travel Agencies*, International Journal of Tourism
Research, Vol. 19, pp. 127-144

Wen, I., (2009) *Factors affecting the online travel buying decision: a review*, International
Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 21 Issue: 6, pp.752-765

World Travel Awards, (2017). Available at:

https://www.worldtravelawards.com/award-worlds-leading-online-travel-agency-2016 [Accessed: 05 April 2017]

Yaman, H., Shaw, R., (2001), *Marketing research and small travel agents: An exploratory Study*, Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp.127-140

Κουμέλης, Θ. 2017 *ACTA: Ανησυχητικά τα μηνύματα της αγοράς για το 2007.*[Online] Available at: http://traveldailynews.gr/news/article/34763 [Accessed: 18 April 2017].

Appendices
Appendix 1

Facebook Insights: Total Number of Likes and Unlikes

Date	Lifetime Total Likes	Daily Likes	Daily Unlikes	Daily Total Reach	Weekly Total Reach
10/3/2017	22785	51	4	21118	84031
11/3/2017	22838	54	4	3	94427
12/3/2017	22871	37	4	32583	103139
13/3/2017	22965	98	3	25351	100346
14/3/2017	23056	93	1	18039	107395
15/3/2017	23083	29	3	14717	119218
16/3/2017	23094	13	2	17271	130836
17/3/2017	23208	123	8	33596	132450
18/3/2017	23230	28	5	14123	120331
19/3/2017	23235	6	1	16099	113319
20/3/2017	23241	9	3	14956	104839
21/3/2017	23246	10	6	15831	102317
22/3/2017	23262	17	1	6025	93300
23/3/2017	23285	26	2	7996	86930
24/3/2017	23297	14	2	9190	70868
25/3/2017	23323	26	0	9509	65470
26/3/2017	23329	8	2	6051	57229
27/3/2017	23335	7	1	11814	53910
28/3/2017	23346	13	2	13074	50791
29/3/2017	23350	5	1	10348	57050
30/3/2017	23360	11	1	8705	59306
31/3/2017	23365	7	2	10497	62234
1/4/2017	23374	7	2	9849	64511
2/4/2017	23379	5	2	10747	68489
3/4/2017	23382	6	4	10022	67073
4/4/2017	23384	43	4	15446	67725
5/4/2017	23423	18	3	11511	63842
6/4/2017	23438	20	1	10992	62060
7/4/2017	23457	3	0	1543	54523

Appendix 2

Facebook Insights: Different Reasons for Click Interactions

Date	Link Clicks	Other Clicks	Photo View	Video Play
10/3/2017	87	53	0	0
11/3/2017	85	88	3	5
12/3/2017	559	227	4	2
13/3/2017	270	206	3	5
14/3/2017	106	127	5	0
15/3/2017	50	26	3	0
16/3/2017	135	51	3	12
17/3/2017	132	1114	248	12
18/3/2017	21	220	56	24
19/3/2017	5	43	13	3
20/3/2017	14	26	10	2
21/3/2017	41	57	17	5
22/3/2017	15	86	26	4
23/3/2017	11	127	55	3
24/3/2017	46	78	41	3
25/3/2017	20	91	37	0
26/3/2017	1	14	9	3
27/3/2017	85	26	6	2
28/3/2017	111	31	8	0
29/3/2017	20	9	7	1
30/3/2017	12	14	14	1
31/3/2017	41	34	8	0
1/4/2017	15	18	9	2
2/4/2017	0	29	14	4
3/4/2017	57	31	11	2
4/4/2017	68	174	62	2
5/4/2017	22	96	30	6
6/4/2017	9	69	41	2
7/4/2017	2	13	4	1

Appendix 3

Facebook Insights: Lifetime Likes by Gender and Age

Date	F. 13-17	F.18-24	F.25-34	F.35-44	F.45-54	F.55-64	F.65+	M.13-17	M.18-24	M.25-34	M.35-44	M.45-54	M.55-64	M.65+
10/3/2017	182	2208	5988	5092	2371	926	318	122	795	1704	1566	834	335	167
11/3/2017	183	2211	5995	5097	2390	940	324	122	795	1699	1569	834	335	167
12/3/2017	183	2212	6004	5105	2391	947	325	123	792	1703	1571	834	336	167
13/3/2017	183	2214	6012	5118	2421	963	335	123	792	1713	1576	834	336	167
14/3/2017	183	2220	6023	5130	2450	981	344	120	794	1714	1578	838	336	167
15/3/2017	183	2221	6027	5140	2452	983	347	120	796	1715	1578	838	337	168
16/3/2017	183	2219	6029	5145	2454	983	347	120	796	1715	1580	839	337	168
17/3/2017	185	2255	6068	5156	2460	983	347	120	801	1729	1581	839	337	168
18/3/2017	186	2255	6073	5160	2463	984	347	120	803	1730	1585	840	337	168
19/3/2017	187	2254	6072	5161	2464	986	347	119	804	1731	1586	840	337	168
20/3/2017	187	2254	6072	5164	2463	986	347	119	805	1731	1588	840	337	168
21/3/2017	187	2258	6071	5164	2465	987	347	119	803	1732	1586	842	337	168
22/3/2017	189	2257	6073	5168	2469	987	348	119	803	1733	1588	842	337	169
23/3/2017	189	2257	6080	5169	2474	990	348	120	804	1735	1588	844	338	169
24/3/2017	189	2257	6084	5174	2473	991	348	120	804	1734	1591	844	338	169
25/3/2017	190	2259	6091	5175	2474	992	348	120	807	1741	1592	844	340	169
26/3/2017	190	2258	6092	5176	2478	992	348	120	807	1742	1592	844	340	169
27/3/2017	189	2258	6088	5182	2480	993	348	119	809	1742	1592	844	341	169
28/3/2017	190	2255	6095	5184	2484	994	348	119	808	1743	1591	844	341	169
29/3/2017	190	2255	6098	5184	2484	994	349	119	808	1741	1594	844	341	168
30/3/2017	190	2256	6097	5192	2483	994	349	119	809	1740	1594	846	342	168
31/3/2017	191	2257	6096	5194	2482	995	349	119	810	1739	1595	846	342	169
1/4/2017	191	2256	6097	5194	2485	995	348	120	811	1740	1591	850	342	169
2/4/2017	191	2255	6096	5195	2487	995	348	120	811	1742	1591	850	342	169
3/4/2017	190	2256	6095	5195	2487	995	347	120	812	1742	1591	851	342	170
4/4/2017	190	2256	6105	5199	2489	997	347	120	817	1750	1595	851	342	170
5/4/2017	190	2259	6108	5199	2491	997	348	120	821	1751	1597	851	342	170

Appendix 4

Facebook Insights: Lifetime Likes by City in Cyprus

DATE	NICOSIA	LIMASSOL	LARNACA	FAMAGUSTA	PAPHOS
10/3/2017	7973	5751	2421	801	944
11/3/2017	8012	5758	2426	803	951
12/3/2017	8029	5765	2441	804	949
13/3/2017	8040	5793	2462	806	953
14/3/2017	8059	5817	2468	811	963
15/3/2017	8064	5820	2468	813	1020
16/3/2017	8066	5824	2469	814	1022
17/3/2017	8136	5853	2475	817	1026
18/3/2017	8134	5847	2472	820	1030
19/3/2017	8148	5790	2471	822	1030
20/3/2017	8147	5790	2473	825	1038
21/3/2017	8068	5833	2482	828	1040
22/3/2017	8130	5833	2486	827	980
23/3/2017	8154	5836	2483	828	990
24/3/2017	8111	5847	2475	827	1047
25/3/2017	8118	5852	2476	828	1048
26/3/2017	8182	5853	2476	828	1048
27/3/2017	8127	5862	2479	829	1045
28/3/2017	8182	5853	2486	828	1041
29/3/2017	8117	5846	2490	829	1038
30/3/2017	8176	5846	2496	832	1037
31/3/2017	8122	5852	2486	834	1042
1/4/2017	8130	5851	2489	835	1042
2/4/2017	8140	5859	2490	831	1039
3/4/2017	8138	5859	2493	888	1037
4/4/2017	8202	5867	2495	829	1041
5/4/2017	8203	5882	2496	831	1036

Appendix 5

Interview Guide

Is there a Digital Plan?

What are the sales goals?

How many % would you like to increase sales?

What marketing efforts do you currently have in place?

Do you have a website?

What is your target audience?

Who buys your services?

What are your key messages?

What needs improvement? What is being improved?

What are the customers saying about your company?

How do your products and services meet the needs of your target audience?

What product and services do you offer?

What promotional tools are you using at the moment?

What are your resources?

How many employees is the company willing to invest to in order to achieve its strategy?

Do you have any associates?

Where does e-marketing belongs in means of hierarchy in your company?

What is your marketing strategy?

How much does the company spend each month/year for marketing? For what kind of marketing?

How many sales have you achieved up to this point?

How willing and adaptive to new promotional ideas is the hierarchy of your company?

What is the expected market share goal?

How willing are you to invest in your staff?

In your opinion, what do you think must be done to improve the marketing of your company?

What are your personal targets towards the improvement of your company's market position?

How effective is the online marketing at this point?

How much are you willing to invest in your marketing strategy?

How much are you willing to invest in advertisements?

How much is the company willing to invest in the development of the website and how much for its promotion?

How much is the maintenance of the website going to cost each year?

How much is the company willing to pay for its online promotion and other types of advertisements?

Can you please describe the buying procedure of the customers?

What is the strongest asset of the company (apart from its people)?

Would it be possible to share the company's sales history?