

INFORMATION AND ADVERTISING OF DIGITAL NEWSPAPERS SPECIALIZED IN GOLF IN SPAIN

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Spain, golf has developed an important increase in the number of fans over the past 20 years. In 1990 there were 45,000 players in Spain, and in late 2013 the figure reached 296,000 (Real Federación Española de Golf, 2013). This evolution in the amount of players has led to a strong development in the sector. Besides being a sport, this practice is closely related to tourism and lifestyle, together with other sectors such as food, health or the environment (Castro, 2009, De la Torre, 2002).

Tourism in Spain was 11% of PIB in 2012 (INE, 2012). Commitment to tourism is a reality and golf is one of the attractions for this important sector, besides the traditional “sun and beach” in Spain. Golf attracts tourism (Feo Parrondo, 2001). In fact, in the summer the beach dominates, and in winter prevails the golf course (Riquel and Vargas, 2012; Martínez, 1986 and Priesley and Sabi, 1987).

Consultant Aguirre Newman (2011) proves that Spain receives annually one million golf tourists. It is the second country to welcome golf tourists after the United States. Each tourist spends an average of 170 Euros a day, and visits our country for one week on average. This means total revenues of 1.2 billion Euros a year.

2. AIMS

The tourism and golf tandem, economy and sport, translates into a new market niche and information with a particular target. This has boosted the emergence of new specialized digital newspapers around the sport (Fernandez, J. G. 2014), with proper targeted advertising for this TARGET.

The main objective of this study is to identify digital newspapers MAINLY golf related, to establish a ranking with the topics that awaken most interest, and to know the brands, products and services advertised.

3. METHODOLOGY

The sample universe was the main digital newspapers specialized in golf. To do this, we have chosen those that meet clear requirements that identify them as online media:

- Prevalence of journalistic information
- Regularly updated
- Hypertext
- Interactivity
- More than 500 followers on Twitter
- With advertising messages: commercial, self-promotion and sponsorship

The sample of online newspapers that has been analyzed is:

- Ten-golf.es with over 4,484 followers (27/03/2014)
- Cronicagolf.com with over 3,728 followers (27/03/2014)
- Lapaginadelgolf.es with over 2,702 followers (27/03/2014)
- Opengolf.com with over 1,804 followers (27/03/2014)
- Elperiodigolf.com with over 1,640 followers (27/03/2014)
- Golfconfidencial with over 813 followers (27/03/2014)
- Doblebogey.es (Golffcast) with over 909 followers (27/03/2014)

The period analyzed goes from February 1st 2014 up until March 28th 2014, both at 12.00 and 18.00 every day. These two months are in the midst of the professional golf season and at the beginning of the most important amateur activities.

The study's parameters are:

- The amount of top stories classified by topics
- The opinion, the use of multimedia and the representation of golf through advertising
- Genders represented
- Product category
- The actions and objects represented
- Types of advertising messages: commercial, self-promotion and sponsorship

3.1. Results

Throughout the two months, a total of 2,190 news have been recorded among seven selected online newspapers specialized in golf, 576 of which have appeared on the weekend, 26.3% of the total.

Elperiodigolf is the one publishing most pieces, a total of 554, representing 25.2% of the total, while Doblebogey is the least publishing one with 111 news, 5% of the total.

News dealing with the world of professional golf are the ones appearing the most in these online newspapers.

In total, 1,640 are related to professional courses and professional competitions in different circuits around the world. This represents 75% of all news.

Following, news about and competitions of amateur national and regional teams from the Royal Spanish Golf Federation, which are tracked by 186 news, 8.5% of the total. 5.2% of the total, i.e. 115 news published, were about the golf industry, with activities, initiatives and news about the world of golf. Also news on amateur tournaments organized by companies have been followed in 87 cases, representing 4% of the total. In this study period there were no news on environment or food.

As for the type of news elaboration, 61% of the total (1,337 pieces) were elaborated in-house, while 566 were not written in-house, representing 25.8% of the total. With regard to opinion, 73 argumentative pieces were posted, 3.3% of the total, while in regard to multimedia capabilities, in these two months 274 videos have been posted, 9.8% of the total. Of those videos, 42 have been made in-house, i.e. 19.6% of the videos posted.

The sectors most heavily advertised are golf courses with 26.8% presence; followed by the media, with 19.5%, and sports equipment, 9.8%. The least represented sectors are events, buildings, department stores, insurance, textile, catering, spas and car rental with 1.2%. The most represented advertisers in the analyzed publications are Decathlon, Los Ángeles de San Rafael, El Encino Golf Bahlsen cookies, Tourism Andorra, Elperiodigolf and Kern Pharma. With regard to gender representation in advertisements, male gender prevails with 19.5% as against 4.9% of female presence. They often show advertising materials without any gender representation (73.2%) and in only 2.4% of the cases both genders appear in the ad. The actions represented are playing (16.3%) and having fun (5.8%), with a 77.9% of no action representation since it is a golf course or a product that is featured.

As for the most outstanding objects related to golf represented in ads, we found golf clubs (28%), the player on the golf course (13.4%), golf balls (7.3%) and facilities (4.9%). As for the most representative types of advertising in the analyzed digital newspapers, there is commercial advertising (84.4%) followed by promotions (6.7%), self-promotion (6.7%) and infomercials (1.1%).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Spanish online newspapers specialized in information about golf are focusing on professional competitions, with 75% of the total having a sportier approach to social or economic data that would contribute less to encourage golf tourism.

Advertising clearly represents men over 50 years, promoting values of the upper class. Golf tourism could benefit if advertising promoted gender parity in this sport and expanded its market niche to young people.

The news and the advertisements on golf online newspapers reflect different realities.

The journalistic content targets a broad and diverse audience with a vast majority of pieces on professional sport. The advertising content is focused on a specific audience, adapting to a target golfer associated with a specific lifestyle.

Golf's evolution as a sport and as an industry should help deepen both journalistic content and advertising content. Such changes in information and publicity would add value to tourism in the golf industry in Spain.