

TITLE: Digitisation for agritourism

1. Introduction

This module aims to introduce users to digital marketing as a way to promote agrotourism businesses. The idea is to give users easy tools to implement digital marketing strategies to reach a wider audience of potential customers, contributing to meeting the need of the agrotourism sector to be adapted to a digital society and turn agrotourism most traditional businesses into a successful and innovative digital businesses.

2. Key elements

2.1 An introduction to digital marketing

Digital marketing refers to all advertising actions and strategies done in an online platform. Digital marketing campaigns can be carried out on platforms such as blogs, websites, social media, email, etc. A properly planned use of these resources can lead to a significant increase in the number of clients. The main benefit of digital marketing is that it allows businesses to gain visibility and promotion irrespective of geographic barriers.

A primary definition of marketing points to the single objective of selling products to a mass market. However, social changes in consumption patterns, advances in technological platforms and, especially, the general digitalisation that we have experienced in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis have been decisive for marketing to take a perspective towards direct and personal contact with the customer, adapting to their tastes and establishing more human and even interactive communication. The digitalisation of an existing agrotourism business has to be planned with these new trends in mind.

Benefits for the agrotourism business	Benefits for customers
Flexibility to adapt to tendencies and seasons (Christmas, Valentines, summer).	Access to a wider range of leisure and tourism options that, without social media presence, would have been impossible to be reached.
Direct contact and interaction – builds trust in the business as clients can remove doubts / solve problems directly with the business owners.	Customisation of services. The client can access information in their own language, and be informed before booking how their trip can be customised to the user’s taste – you should include your customizable options in your webpage and social media. Direct communication with the service provider. Customers can settle their doubts.
Competitiveness with large tourism companies.	They can easily reach a wider variety of tourism options.
Globally offer agrotourism business services.	Access to a worldwide service offer. It is easier to find something that matches your preferences as customer.

Possibility to better target your customers. Online publishing resources are easily adaptable and dynamic, making it possible to define the type of customer you are addressing, adapt our messages to cultural tendencies, languages, etc.	
Easier to catch our client attention	
Services can be booked 24/365, making our business accessible to every part of the world.	

2.2 Easy steps to become digital

1. **Register on Google My Business** – This is a free tool provided by Google to help businesses manage their online presence. You can manage how your business is displayed in Google Maps and Google Search.
2. **Create an attractive website** – It is the basis of marketing and a showcase to open your agrotourism business to the world. The ideal is to make a simple but attractive website, with good photos of your business, the environment, local attractions, etc. You can use platforms like WordPress, Shopify, webador...
3. **Start using social media** – They allow direct communication with clients but also sharing content in different formats. The best idea is to plan your social media strategy with an expert to make use of them to the best advantage.
4. **Register at [Goinsitu](#)** – This online portal is specific for agrotourism businesses to present their profiles and connect with travellers from all around the world.
5. **Include your agrotourism business in online booking sites** – Register your site with online booking services or try to incorporate your own booking engine on your website.
6. **Create a blog** – You can use it to provide useful and interesting information about your region, local events, local stories and myths, tips, tourist routes close to your agrotourism site, etc.
7. You will also need to plan a **complete digital strategy**. You can, of course, do it by yourself or hire a professional to help you, at least at the beginning.

2.3 Digital tools for my agrotourism business

- 1 **WordPress:** is a free, open-source Content Management Systems (CMS). You can use this to create your business website, blogs, online shops, forums, etc. and manage it from an administration panel.
- 2 **MailChimp:** is a free tool to manage email lists and send online campaigns, newsletters, offers, etc. To get a complete mailing list you'd save your customers email directions used in the booking process, but you should ask them for permission for including them in your database and sending them information.
- 3 **Google Trends:** This will give you information about worldwide online trends to know what users are searching most frequently using Google. You can use this information for SEO

purposes and use the most talked-about topics to create content for your social media accounts, newsletter, blog, etc.

- 4 **Canva:** You can use this to create visual content for your social media accounts. However, if you wish to have a great visual identity and boost its quality, it is better to hire a graphic-design professional.
- 5 **Hootsuite:** is a social media content management platform. It will allow you to manage all your social media accounts in one place, rather than on each individual social network. This makes it easier and faster to share and schedule content on your social media accounts, respond to your audience and interact with them.
- 6 **Google Analytics:** provides information on how visitors behave on your website, how they got there and what can be done to keep them coming back. Its content reports show you which parts of your website are performing well and which pages are most popular, so you can create new content and a better experience for your customers.

3. Example

Sustainability Communication in Rural Tourism: Website Content Analysis, in Viseu Dão Lafões Region (Portugal)

<https://media.proquest.com/media/hms/PFT/1/kwW8M?s=YvVvgeISD9kVybuDjDnHfXCVz70%3D>

To achieve sustainability it is crucial that rural tourism lodgings communicate their essence, as well the products and experiences available for tourists. This because it is a common practice for visitors to look for more information on the internet about where they will be staying, before booking their tourist experience. The main objective of this study is the analysis of the information provided by rural tourism lodgings, through their websites, regarding sustainability issues.

4. Benefits and potential impact

The benefits and impact you might have from the guideline implementation are:

For the mentor	For the mentee
✓ An easy guide to introduce agrotourism businesses to the need to keep pace with the digital work	✓ Discovering tools and resources to go digital
	✓ Becoming an attractive option to a wider range of customers, even internationally