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Break the seasonality through the Social Media

The case of Mallorca

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Abstract

Title: Break the seasonality through the social media

Research Question: How the marketing strategies in social media are used by the companies in Mallorca to break the seasonality?

Supervisor: Venilton Reinert

Course: Strategic Marketing with Independent Project

Keywords: Social Media, online communication, low season, Mallorca, online marketing

Purpose: The objective of the thesis was to get a better comprehension and knowledge by an examination of some companies to know how they integrate the Social Media in their marketing strategies regarding changes in customer habits to face a problem, in this case the seasonality.

Methodology: A qualitative research method and an explorative and descriptive research approach has been used for this study. Then, it was studied a non-random sampling where the information has been collected by interviews. The investigation was a multiple case study with seven companies of Mallorca related with the tourism.

Conclusion: The Social Media can support some companies which are trying to survive in the low season. Nevertheless, the companies need to launch new activities, products or services to sell that through the social network. In sum, it is a tool, not an end, to confront the low season.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Spain is the fourth country in the world in number of foreign tourist. It is being overcome by France, United States and China. Spain received 68.1 millions of tourists in 2015, 4.9% more than the last year, of which 13 million went to Mallorca (Instituto Nacional de Estadística; Hostelería y Turismo, 2016). Nowadays, the Island is one of the main destinations at national and European level as “Sun and Beach Holidays”. Despite this, Mallorca suffers from certain structural deficits that make its long-term sustainability difficult. One of the most important challenges that it faces is the seasonality of tourism flows.

According to the Federación Empresarial Hotelera de Mallorca (FEHM, 2016), the data of seasonality decreased the last year since 2015 had the best rate of visitors in low season. The decreasing rate of the seasonality, according to FEHM, is linked with the evolution of the social media since companies can achieve more customers. It is possible thanks to their new marketing strategies.

Seasonality in tourism is a universal problem that appears in varying degrees of importance according to the destination (Yacoumis, 1980). All destinations have some sort of seasonality, in some cases is extreme (Murphy, 1997) as in coastal or winter sports tourism destinations, this is the case of Mallorca; and other minimum (Butler and Mao, 1997) as the urban destinations.

Service firms establish their strategy and positioning through the traditional marketing mix which is associated with the four Ps: Product, Price, Promotion and Place (McCarthy, 1975). Booms and Bitner (1981) developed the traditional marketing mix for the service marketing mix with 3P’s more; people, it includes people who are directly or indirectly involved in the trade of the service (Booms and Bitner, 1981); process, it is the efficiency of the process in the delivery of the service (Lancaster and Reynolds, 2004); and physical environment, it is related to reduce the feeling of risk of the potential customer when they are deciding whether or not to use a service, it is vital for them to see what product would be better through photographs or testimonials (Rodríguez, 2013).
Those three additional marketing approaches influence the decision of the customers and their level of satisfaction.

New technologies brought changes in the customer behavior and new communication tools (Zdina and Wright, 2009). Marketers have to apply the Internet and related technologies in conjunction with traditional communications to achieve their marketing objectives. The Institute of Direct and Digital Marketing (2014) explains that the Digital marketing recognizes the strategic importance of digital technologies and develops a planned approach to reach and migrate customers to online services through e-communications and traditional communications. Much progress has been made about the web and related technologies: web 1.0 as a web of cognition, web 2.0 as a web of communication and web 3.0 as a web of cooperation (Aghaie, Nematbakhsh and Farsani, 2012).

The traditional communication (Marketing 1.0) was from the twentieth century to the mid-twentieth century and it established static products with a unidirectional communication, through a passive diffusion (López, 2012). Moreover, Web 1.0 is not entirely suitable for advertising purposes, as it was not a mass communication and updates were not as frequent as in the current web. By all these hindrances, it was assumed that the web 1.0 did not show any incentive, so they needed to evolve to become an effective means of communication (Fernández, Aguirregoitia and Boix 2010). Some tools of traditional communications in the tourism sector were the postal mailings, newspaper, television, the printed catalogues and the tourism organization such as the tour operators (Karlsson of BKWine, 2011). Both traditional and online communication tools are used by the companies to face the seasonality problem (Hiroshi Onishi, 2011).

O’Reilly (2006) stated that the Web 2.0 is a business revolution where the companies need to attract more customers through Internet as a platform, interacting with them to share content and build relationships to obtain business opportunities. In other words, it facilitates major properties like participation and collaboration, so it facilities reading and writing on the web which makes the web transaction bi-directional (Choudhury, 2014). Some examples of web 2.0 can be weblogs (blogs), social bookmarking, communication tools, wikis, podcasts, online web services such as eBay and Gmail and so on. These
technologies provide enhancements over read-only websites (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh and Farsani, 2012).

In addition, Web 2.0 has a major impact in the tourism sector, because the travelers use the Internet in order to be informed about tourism destinations and services and products (Sigala, 2007). Social media (SM) is playing a very crucial role as information source for tourists. Moreover, the tourism organizations increasingly need to identify consumer needs and also to interact with clients by using personal communication media to design products that satisfy the tourism demand (Buhalis, 2013). SM influence directly the decision-making process of the customers and nowadays, it can be defined as a tourism organization marketing and as a communication tool (Noti, 2013).

Web 3.0 was first coined by John Mark of the New York Times (Nova, 2011). The basic idea of web 3.0 is to define structure data and link them in order to more effective discovery, automation, integration and reuse across various applications (Choudhury, 2014). It is able to improve data management, support accessibility of mobile internet, stimulate creativity and innovation, enhance the satisfaction of the customers and help to organize collaboration in social web. (Agaei, Nematbakhsh and Farsani, 2012). Related with the tourism, it is giving the opportunity to offer the tourist services to their customers before being requested, but according to their preferences (Fernández, Aguirregoitia and Boix, 2010).

The tourism strategies on the Web should provide added value to the tourism destinations. To achieve the objectives, it is necessary to develop a set of adequate strategies, combined each other (Wind, 2002). The first step is to develop an image of the tourist destination. According to Gallarza (2001), it is possible to define the image of the tourist destination as the mental structure based on the impressions, concepts, imagination and emotional thoughts developed through a process of perception, by one or more people about a determined tourism destination. Govers and Go (2003) indicated that the tourist couldn't developed an image without having been there. However, with the evolution of the Internet as a new information source, it is possible to build this image due to its accessibility, its interactive communities, its comfort and its speed (Bonn et al., 1998) and today it is known as the most important source of information (Buhalis, 1998).
through the use of the multimedia as a communication resource since the people prefer to obtain and understand the messages sent through videos or sounds (Smith and Mackay, 2001). To obtain the best response from the customers, the inclusion of videos, music and sounds in the web site of the tourism destination is good way for an effective communication (Cruz, 2005).

Thus, the promotion strategies on the web are an efficient tool to strengthen this image. The web site of Mallorca is structured in this way, during the summer it tries to support the idea of “sun and beach”, but during the other seasons it wants to offer a different point of view (illesbalears.travel, 2016). There are some online strategies used by the companies in the low season. The most used are search engine optimization (SEO), pay-per-click (PPC) or Google AdWords, email marketing, affiliate marketing and social marketing. The first one, the SEO is the process of getting traffic from the “free, organic, editorial or natural” and primary search results on search engines (searchengineland.com, 2016). The second one, the PPC, is defined as a kind of online marketing in which the advertisers pay a fee each time one of their ads is clicked (wordstream.com, 2016). Another one is the email-marketing and it is the use of the email address with commercial or informative movement. This method integrates the permission marketing, which distinguishes it from the spam (Godin, 1999). An alternative is the affiliate marketing and it is used when a revenue is sharing venture between two businesses. The businesses pay to their affiliates for sending new customers to their website (verticalresponse.com, 2016). The last one, as a company generates an interaction between the different social network sites, it is important to create contact with the customer (Schroeder, 2013).

Web 2.0 and online social networking websites heavily affect today most of the online activities and their effect on tourism is obviously rather important, for the companies and for the destinations (Milano, Baggio and Piattelli, 2011). Through the blogs, the user’s communities and the social media, the tourist can criticize or make recommendations of the destinations and their tourism services. Furthermore, the companies can know and learn more about the tastes and the interests of the customers (Munuera y Rodríguez, 1998).

It is important to take into account the low cost of these communication tools, in that way the ratio cost/impact reduce significantly the promotion price and in time of crisis it is a
good way to save money. In addition, the assumption of reduction of transaction costs has been validated (Hess and Kemerer, 1994), which results an incentive for the tourism organizations when they have to offer a product or a service on Internet. For example, Facebook is a day-to-day interaction with the customers, allowing an immediate feedback from your ads, promotions and sales. This allows your company to be more nimble by being able to react faster as trends come and go (Velázquez, 2011).

The social media is the best way to communicate with the customers in all aspects, but the company that use the Web also have to know how dangerous it is (Nielsen, 2007). One example is that the newspaper of the Travel Weekly made a survey about an increase in the use of review sites by travelers who use agents and the growing importance of sites such as TripAdvisor in the decision-making of the travelers. The results show that some travelers might be more interested in validation of their choices than others. While the percentage of travelers who say they are influenced by review sites stayed roughly the same as the previous year (55%), the numbers of respondents who used an agent and said review sites were influential jumped from 59% to 72%. (travelweekly.com). Also the companies have to take into account that the 95% of the customers share their bad experiences and 87% share their good experiences with others (Dimensional Research, 2013).

On the other hand, a research of the American analysis institute, SAS (Statistical Analysis System, 2016), in order to investigate general booking behavior of people searching for accommodation via online channels. The result was that driving revenue and share in the hospitality industry is no longer just about competing on price. Consumers are clearly turning to user-generated content to inform their purchase decisions, in particular, reviews. Therefore, hoteliers must not only keep an eye on how they are priced relative to the market, but also on how they are positioned in terms of reputation (McGuire, 2014).

1.2 Problem

The tourism plays a key role in the economy of the Balearic Islands given its contribution to the gross domestic product, close to 40%, its weight in the business network of the Islands, more than the 18%, and in the number of jobs that it generates and previously from 1961 to 1973 it was only the 2% (ibestat.es, 2016). Between the Islands, the largest
and the most important one is Mallorca. The INE (National Institute of Statistics) said that there were 859,289 inhabitants in 2015.

The tourism in Mallorca is currently in a moment of a peak and expansion with a continued growth of the number of tourists who visit the Island the last years. Nevertheless, the affluence of visitors does not evolved in the same ways all months of the year. There are two seasons. The high season is from May to September and the low season is from October to April. The seasonality is a problem because it is putting in risk the sustainable growth of a model that in high season it is near to saturation (FEHM, 2015).

Until September 2015 Mallorca received 12,976,390, which from 11,127,907 are from the high season, which means from May to September. In 2014, Mallorca received 9,650,469 tourists from which the 7,209,988 (caib.es) tourists are from the high season, as we said before. In the other hand, the low season is very hard for some companies in Mallorca who live for tourism because there are seven difficult months.

The seasonality phenomenon causes serious problems in the tourism sector due to the instability and the uncertainty that is caused by the sudden changes in the occupation of the tourist establishments (Ramón and Abellán, 1995).

One of the most important problems related to the seasonal employment is to hire and keep the full-time skilled human resources. This results in the direction of low-educated, unskilled, and semi-skilled workforce to the industry. This causes unsustainability of the quality of services (Jolliffe and Farnsworth, 2006). In fact, seasonality affects all aspects of the tourist industry, including hotel occupancy rates, as well as employment and retention of labor, and under-utilization of tourist attractions and services during the off-season (Koc and Altinay, 2007). Apart from the job instability and the low profitability, the Island suffers strong variations in the prices, since in the high season there is an increase in the price of the transport, of the accommodation and others tourism services. Therefore, these prices suffer strong decreases in the low season. (Nieto González, Amate Fortes, and Román Sánchez, 2000).
Because of all these problem originated by the seasonality and the importance of the tourism in the Spain economy in general, and in Mallorca in particular, the policies to broke the seasonality have a significant place in the economy policies of our country (Tur, 1998).

It can be considered that the main problem of the seasonality is for the province and not for the company. For example, there is the problem of the air carriers, which the companies reduce the destinations and the flights in the low season when the majority of tourists prefer the plane and some authors stated that “Mallorca disappears virtually in the map of airlines” (Amador, 2014). Thus, the companies should take into account their presence at the social networks. According to Joan Clos i Matheu (2007), who was Spanish minister of Industry, Tourism and Trade, the tourists demand the use of technological advances for comfort, both from the point of view of the tourist information and the provision of services and marketing.

In the last year there was a change of tendency in the tourism sector of Mallorca that registered an increase of the number of visitors in the low season after five years of decline (Instituto Nacional de Estadística; Hostelería y Turismo, 2016). The administrations have designated important resources focused on create new products, to launch promotional campaigns specifically for the low season, promoting new types of tourism products and markets with different seasonal patterns from the traditional sun and beach tourism. Mallorca needs to flee from this traditional pattern. The Island has to develop another model to be profitable and sustainable in the time, allowing to exploit and potentiate its resources, differentiating itself from the competitors in low season.

According to Aaker, D. (1987), the company has to generate a sustained competitive advantage, based on the advantage from the cost or through the differentiation of its offer regarding competition and this confirms the words of Porter, in his book of Competitive Strategy (1980).

These strategies are based on the use of the social media as a strategic element in the marketing communication. Social media plays an important role on the supply and on the demand side of tourism allowing destinations to interact directly with visitors through Internet platforms and monitor and react to the opinion of the visitors and evaluations of
services. In this way, Internet has changed the business of the tourism. The benefits of social media and its effectiveness to destinations can be seen especially as an increase of the brand reputation since it generates word of mouth marketing, creates a competitive advantage, increases customers fidelity, increases sales and so on (Cipriani, 2010).

According to Hubspot (2014), the 92% of marketers claimed that the social media marketing was important for their business, the 80% highlight their efforts to increase the traffic of their websites. Social Media Examiner (2014) said that the 97% of marketers are currently participating in the social media, but the 85% of participants are not sure what social media tools is the best to use (DeMers, 2014).

After this classification, the strategy of Mallorca is based mainly on the differentiation, trying to offer services with distinctive qualities to competition. The main competitors in the low season are Sevilla, Galicia, Madrid, the Basque Country and Barcelona (Klecker, Samu, Verger, Esponera, Fernández and Colomina, 2014). Related to marketing, this strategy has the chance to change the competitive position of the city, offering the possibility to obtain greatest profits due to the market can accept high prices. The Island wants to attract more visitors through strategies to increase experiences of the tourists, offering the possibility to enjoy the different attributes of the island like nature, sport, culture, shopping, gastronomy, events, convention and health tourism (Klecker, Samu, Verger, Esponera, Fernández and Colomina, 2014).

Nowadays, the destinations change their traditional communication strategies based on radio, billboards, television and printed media towards Internet and social media. Since the world is changing, the organizations are forced to innovate, applying new communication strategies, which are designed to communicate effectively, as we explained before.

Since the authors are natives from Mallorca and also their families, from their experience it is possible to explain the problem of the seasonality, its evolution through the social media and its consequences because nowadays, tourism sector has a close relationship with the new technologies.
Since the emergence of the Internet as a new strategic tool, the tourism of the Island has evolved to new markets to face the serious problem of the seasonality, which not only affect to the tourism companies, also companies of other sectors are affected in one form or another (hospitals, museums, shops, restaurants and so on). Nowadays, the Social Media is very important for its utility, its actuality and its growth potential so our research tries to find out, by means of interviews, how issues are faced by a company.

1.3 Purpose

The present study focuses on the use of Social Media as a strategic element in the company’s communication strategies in the low season. So, the purpose is to understand how companies use social media to cope with this problem.

- How the marketing strategies in social media are used by the companies in Mallorca to break the seasonality?

The objective of the thesis is to get a better comprehension and knowledge, by an examination of some companies, to know how they integrate the Social Media in their marketing strategies regarding changes in customer habits to face a problem, in this case the seasonality.

1.4 Definitions

- INE: Instituto Nacional de Estadística de España (Spanish Statistical Office) is an Autonomous Organization and administrative nature, under the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness. It is assigned by law a prominent role in public statistical activity.
- Plan integral de turismo: It is a roadmap with groundbreaking solutions for the various challenges faced by the tourism industry.
- CAIB: Web page from the Government of the Balearic Island (www.caib.es)
- SM: Social Media is “the set of web-based broadcast technologies that enable the democratization of content, giving people the ability to emerge from consumers of content to publishers” (Jacka, and Scott, 2011, p.5).
o ACPHM: It is the company that we have interviewed, Asociación Cultural Patrimonio Histórico del Mediterráneo

o FEHM: Federación Empresarial Hotelera de Mallorca is an organization created in 1976 that meets 972 tourist accommodation establishments and 221,066 hotel rooms, which represents 80% of the hotel rooms in Mallorca.

o Google AdWords: It is a “Google’s advertising system in which advertisers bid on certain keywords in order for their clickable ads to appear in Google’s search results” (wordstream.com, 2016).

o SEM: Search Engine Marketing is “the process of gaining website traffic by purchasing ads on search engines” (searchengineland.com, 2016).

o SEO: Search Engine Optimizations is “the process of getting traffic from the “free, organic editorial or natural” search results on search engines” (searchengineland.com, 2016).

1.5 Delimitations

The study is limited to study the promotional marketing mix used in the low season through social media of seven tourism companies in Mallorca, in no case was going to study the service, price or place. It is concentrated in communication strategies. The research will not touch the behavior or the preferences of the tourist.

2. Theoretical framework

Eisenhart defined a theoretical framework as a structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory. It is constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships (1991, p. 205).

2.1 SWOT Analysis

According to Ghazinoory, Abdi and Azadegan-Mehr (2011), the SWOT is a systematic framework, which helps managers to develop their business strategies by appraising the internal and external determinants of their organization’s performance. The SWOT analysis framework involves analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the business’s internal
factors, and the opportunities and threats of its external factors of performance (Ghazinoory, Abdi and Azadegan-Mehr, 2011). Through this analysis, the weaknesses and strengths within a company can correspond to the opportunities and threats in the business environment so that effective strategies can be developed (Helms and Nixon, 2010).

2.1.1 Strengths

The first step to a SWOT analysis of the seasonality of Mallorca will be identifying its strengths.

- Mallorca offers, especially in the low season, a safe and secure environment, a privileged natural environment and indeed, it is provided with additional quality services that make it a highly attractive destination such as golf courses, rural fields, hiking and so on (Alemany Mármol, Ruiz García and Suau Piña, 2010).

- Furthermore, the tourist structure of Mallorca is prepared to offer a high quality products on reasonable prices and thanks to the Social Networks is easy to communicate with the future tourists and inform them about that (Forcades and Martorell, 2003).

- In addition, Mallorca has years of experience in the development of programs specially adapted to senior tourism (Klecker, Samu and Verger, 2014). Its development favors the maintenance of tourism in low season and enables the development of new market segments. Thus, we can see that in the offseason some companies decide to use the tour operators than the Social Media, because normally the travels of senior tourists are organized by some companies (Klecker, A., Samu, and Verger, 2014).

- Thanks to the climate, in Mallorca it is possible to play golf more than three hundred days per year and the Island enjoys an international recognition being a prime tourist destination (Barceló Horrach, Alemany Mármol, Ruiz García, and Suau Piña, 2010).
Mallorca has a good infrastructure and a varied complementary offer in order to satisfy the tourism of cycling (Alemany, 2014). Furthermore, the climate helps to empower the tourist of the low season, because the flows of the cyclists in Mallorca have an extreme concentration the months of February, March, April and May (Barceló Horrach, Alemany Mármol, Ruiz García and Suau Piña, 2010). Besides, there are important competitions for the people who love cycling such as Mallorca 312, Transtramuntana 4500 and Challenge Ciclista Mallorca, among others. All of these competitions are in the low season and the people who participate and their families comes from around the world.

Mallorca has an important promotional impact in the main sailing competitions such as la Copa del Rey de Vela, el trofeo de vela S.A.R. Princesa Sofía or la Regata Almirante Conde de Barcelona, among others and it is also important the participation of some members of the Royal Family in some of them. That is why the nautical tourism is an important and great economic activity and it maintains a constant tendency to rise, even the years of crisis (Forcades Juan and Martorell Cunill, 2003).

2.1.2 Weakness

Next in line is assessing the weaknesses.

Although the climate in Mallorca is pleasant in the low season, there are other alternative markets, such as the Canary Islands or the Southern Portugal, with a better climate (Coll Ramis and Seguí Llinás, 2014).

As it was explained before, a further weakness is the air connectivity that it is reduced in the low season, except for the connections from Mallorca to Germany or to different cities of Spain (Forcades and Martorell, 2003). It also affects to the tourism that goes to Mallorca in the off-season to practice some sports like golf or cycle tourism.
The general structure of the tourism industry of Mallorca is more oriented to the summer. In low season, tourist activity decreased, reducing the attractiveness of destination (Benckendorff, 2014). It would be interesting if it could relate the influence of Social Media with the attractiveness as a solution.

- Related to play golf in Mallorca, it has emerged new competitors in the Mediterranean and in the Caribbean (Juan and Martorell, 2003). However, this is a weak point in short term, because in long term, it could fix it through a marketing strategy and with the e-communication tools.

### 2.1.3 Opportunities

The third strategic element to analysis is the opportunities.

- The senior tourism development can promote the lengthening of the tourist season and act as a dynamic element in the fight against seasonality (Forcades Juan and Martorell Cunill, 2003).

- Mallorca has a strong potential for desseasonalization based mainly on climatic differences between the major emitting countries and the traditional tourist destinations such as the Balearic Islands. So, Mallorca has a comparative advantage in relation to climate issuer markets, which makes the tourism sports an interesting segment to develop strategies aimed at reducing seasonality (Klecker, Samu, Verger, Esponera, Fernández and Colomina, 2014).

- Related to the golf, it could increase the presence of new source markets, particularly regain the British, Scandinavian and develop strategies more open to French and Benelux Market. (Garau Vadell, Borja Solé and Juan Vigaray, 2007)
Where there are opportunities, you will also find threats.

- The decrease in the cost of air transport and the development of alternative destinations, not only in Europe but also in other continents, it will increase possibly in this segment, which the competitiveness of the Balearic Island may decrease (Forcades Juan and Martorell Cunill, 2003).

- On the other hand, the overdevelopment of the senior tourism can lead to the creation of an international image that it identify Mallorca as only senior destination, making it difficult to attract other segments of highly attractive market and could produce some “exclusive effect” of other types of tourism (Tur Tur and Garau Vadell, 2000).

- According to the Cambra de Comerç (2003), the presence in the monetary union and the absence of many competitor destination leads to the increasing inability to compete on cost and wages and, therefore, prices. In spite of that, Mallorca can be a destination with good quality/price ratio. That’s why it should offers a product that include things such as more possibilities for fast and efficient communication in both the public and private transport in the off-season (Forcades Juan and Martorell Cunill, 2003).

2.1.5 Developed strategies in the low season

Therefore, after the SWOT analysis, there are more points of strengths and opportunities than weakness and threats. The question is, if Mallorca has so many positive points, why it cannot confront the low season? However, the Cámara de Comercio of Mallorca, based on the study “Mallorca más allá del sol y playa”, has suggested a strategy to boost the affluence of tourist in the low season based on five strategic axes (Hosteltur, 2014):

- The promotion of the winter on the Island and its intangibles.
- Develop and strategy of the product launching the experience’s tourism.
- Company’s incentives.
Deep knowledge of the client and their typologies.

Well coordination between the public and private agents of Mallorca.

### 2.2 Marketing communication strategies

According to the American Marketing Association (1998), marketing is defined as a process based on the exchange of information (concept, price, promotion, and distribution) to satisfy individual and organizational objectives. According to Frazier and Summers (1984), the communication in marketing channel can be defined as the process by which influential information is transmitted.

The marketing communication is defined by Govoni (2004, p.158) as “the combination of the elements, activities and techniques an organization employs to connect with and persuade the target market to engage in a particular action or response such as buying a product, using a service or accepting an idea.”

Nowadays, the goal of the marketing is developing and sustaining relationships with their customers and with the growth of the Internet it is possible (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Today, the customers have a variety of communication options available to strengthen their position in their relation to business (Lexhagen, 2009). The Social Media permits an interaction that allows collaboration to identify problems and solutions between the online communities.

However, despite this apparent enthusiasm for online marketing and the idea of Social Media as a powerful medium for building relationships with the customer (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014), there are a lot of studies that state that social media marketing should be seen as a complement to, not replacement for, more traditional advertising methods (Kevin Dendy, 2010).
2.2.1 Online marketing

Internet has revolutionized our life and it has changed the way we communicate (Laura Harrison, 2014). Nowadays, there are more than 500 million websites around the world and more than 2 billion people go online. Due to this revolution, people have access to more information and the possibility to share opinions and perceptions in a way which was not possible the past generations (Morrissey, 2005). The customers know that they are more powerful than ever and this feeling creates more relationships between clients and suppliers (Foucault, 1972). Internet helps to achieve its main goal, to retain customers (Pine, 1995, Sasser, 1990 and Koufari, 2002). As Sawhney and Kotler (2001) stated, the Internet has evolved from the “information scarcity” to “information democracy”.

However, the target market is in both online and offline world, so a good communication strategy has to be based on both markets to be effective as is described above. The communication tools have to interact and be complements (Enrique Ayesa, 2015).

The competition has increased from the emergence of the Internet since the companies can compete with other ones even though they are in different geographical areas (Mundorf, 2002) and people can buy the products through Internet independently the country of residence (Hanson, 2000).

Online marketing is an effective method to reach customers with a message. When you are motivated to buy something due to an advertisement, you are influenced by a technique called A.I.D.A.S. The AIDAS model tries to describe the effects produced by an advertising message (Cantone, D. 2011).

This model can be applied to online and offline marketing (Ashcroft and Hoey, 2001). But unlike most traditional methods, with the proliferation of marketing channels, the online market seems to be a space where all the stages of the process can be naturally integrated to get the attention of the audience (Sarah Green, 2015).

AIDAS model stands for five steps: Attention, Interest, Desire, Action and Satisfaction.
• Attention: the first step occurs at the beginning and as a company; you have to attract the attention of the customers for the product. An effective method to achieve this attention is through the Internet. According to Jakobsson (1995), the company needs to have a representative role on web sites to improve the chance to attract the attention of the customers. As Sarah Green (2010) states, the companies can create awareness of themselves through popular social networks like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and so on. It is a method to gain fast and easy attention.

• Interest: the second step is to provide some information of the product such as details, price or availability to create interest to purchase the product of the company by focusing on advantages and benefits (Li J., 2013). The internet helps the companies to increase the interest. As Smith and Catalano said (1998, p.41) “the company must to design its website and it has to be easy to navigate and seek information” to raise them the interest to assess whether they meet their needs or expectations.

• Desire: in the third stage, the objective of the organization is to show the prospects to the customers about how your product or service can solve their problem (Joseph Chris, 2013). You have to ensure that your product will satisfy their needs, wants and interests. You can guarantee the features of the product through posts on your websites from satisfied customers telling their experiences (Jakobsson, 1995). The organizations can create better strong relationships with the customers if they regularly updated new information (Janal, 2000).

• Action: the fourth one can be defined as a result of the three previous steps, since it is what leads consumers to take the action of purchasing the product. After the decision of the customer, the company is who has to facilitate the process and since the emergence of the internet and the e-commerce it is easier than ever (Jakobsson, 1995). According to Janal (2000), if the company facilitates the online shopping, the customers will feel more satisfied and it helps to create and maintain a relationship.
Satisfaction: There are a lot of studies that highlight the importance of the customer satisfaction. According to Frumkin Tamar (2015), when a person is satisfied or dissatisfied with a company, a product or a service they are likely to share their experience with other people. According to American Express Global Customer Service (2016), 42% of people will tell their friends about a good customer experience, while 53% will talk about a bad one. According to Bain (2016), Social Media plays an important role in the customer experiences since there are a lot of web sites with comments of people making both, good and bad promotion. For this reason consumer satisfaction is a good opportunity to improve your business.

2.2.2 Online marketing mix

As Doyle (2002) said, the marketing mix is the central tool for marketers and for all kinds of marketing analysis. This set of tools (Product, Price, Promotion and Place) is use by companies to achieve their objectives. It is a way to decide how the company should position itself on the market and how they want to be perceived by the customers (Kotler, 2005)

2.2.2.1 Product

Kotler and Armstrong (2014, p.248) defined product as “anything that is offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a want or a need”

2.2.2.2 Price

The second tool is defined as “the amount of money charged for a product or services, or the sum of the value that customers exchange for the benefits of having or using the product or service” by Kotler and Armstrong (2014, p.313)

2.2.2.3 Place

This term is related with the process of moving products from producers to customers, making products available when and where they want (Kotler, 1999). This process can be on its own or through distributors.
2.2.2.4 Promotion

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2014, p.429) the promotion mix of a company is “the specific blend of promotion tools that the company uses to persuasively communicate customer value and build customer relationship”. These promotion tools are: advertising, sales promotions, public relations, direct sales and direct marketing (Kotler, 1999), which are described below:

- Online Advertising: Advertisement surrounds us every day and as Dwyer and Tanner (2002) stated, advertising is related and begins with a base of creating awareness and strengthening a position of the company or image. In some instances, customer will order directly from advertising, so the final purpose of advertising is to generate sales.

Nowadays, since the growth of the Internet, it is very important to talk about the online advertising that it is related to the subject of our project. Online advertising is a natural choice for modern businesses because it helps businesses to find new potential clients (Santoro, R. 2015). The first Internet advertising was a banner ad and it appeared in 1994 (Nielsen, 2000) and it is known as the most common online advertising although nowadays the firms tend to forbid them (Altstiel, 2006).

- Online sales promotion: according to Kotler (2005), it is used by companies to encourage consumers to buy a product, but the usage of it can also provide or create an interest that makes the customers visit the website again (Fill, 2006). According to Gay et al. al (2007) sales promotion are short-term activities which intentions are to attract and retain customers to buy products or services. The Internet gives more opportunities for marketers to develop new designs for sales promotions that can be more thrilling and enjoyable for the customer (Sonal & Preeta, 2005).

- Online public relations: it involves building good relations between company and its public to create a positive image (Kotler, 2005). According to Kotler and Keller (2007) public relations tools covers many aspects as: publications, identity media,
events, speeches and sponsorships. The last one, due to the rise of the Internet and social media has given public relations a big boost and this is the main activity in online marketing communication, both as a partnership deal and sponsorships of websites (Fill, 2006).

- Online direct marketing: it is often addressed to a specific person and is therefore non-public form of promotion (Kotler, 2005). The direct marketing can be used as a tool to attract consumer to a website (Fill, 2006). The differences between online and offline direct marketing is driven by one simple economic fact: cost per incremental online contact is effectively zero (Johnson, 2006). According to Fill (2006), the most used form of direct marketing, in sense of use Internet as a media, is e-mail. Johnson (2006) posted on his web page that each email sent has a much reduced cost or even almost non-existent.

- Online personal selling: according to Kotler (2009, p.690), this term can be defined as “face-to-face interaction with one or more prospective purchasers for the purpose of making presentations, answering questions and procuring orders. Personal selling consist of human contact and direct communication, for this reason Fill (2006) believes that it does not exist because it is not possible for the selling staff to have a direct contact with customers.

2.2.3 Social Media strategic communication element

A lot of researchers have written about social media and there are various definitions. For this reason there is a lot of confusion regarding the meaning of the term. There are some authors that do not found a specific definition to explain the meaning of social media (Walaski, 2013) or someone who claim that the meaning depends on the customers and companies (Andzulis, 2012).

Safko and Brake (2009, p.6) define social media as “activities, practices, and behaviors among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media”. And Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p.61) as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content”.

20
Social Media has revolutionized the way to interact and communicate with each other and with the organizations. The company allows the individuals to be a part of the creation of content and also to distribute them (Zarrella, 2009). Today, people and companies are constantly connected through the different online social networks (Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden, 2011).

The implementation of the Social media has some advantages as a promotion tool since the company can spread its product or service through blogs, online communities and so on. Also, it can improve the sales through the recommendation reviews on social networking sites, which can be highly influential (Bernoff & Li, 2008). Social Media can reach a large audience in a cost-effective way (Chaffey, 2012). The characteristics of Social Media are quite different from traditional marketing communication channels (Driesener, 2015). The main features are:

- Interactivity and individualization: Many of the traditional marketing channels only allow one-way interaction between clients and marketers. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) highlight the importance of create and share the content.

- Integration of communication and distribution channels: the growth of Social Media has brought changes in these channels since now are much closer and made it easier for customers to move between them (Barrie Driesener, 2015).

- Immediacy: Social Media facilitates the access of the information to the customers since it permits a quickly response to them (Kapoulas, 2012).

- Information Collection: Social Media permits gathering information about the needs and the preferences of the buyers through their opinions on the web sites and it helps to know where and why is the problem (Bekkers, 2013).

All these features help the company to create a loyal relationship with the customers; this relation is seen as an opportunity to use social media as a tool for its marketing strategies (Reyneke et al., 2011). According to the Social Media Marketing Industry (2012), it states that the 94% of the marketers include the Social Media in their marketing campaigns.
because it is an important tool for the business. According to DeMers, (2014) the companies recognize some benefits like:

- Increase the reputation of the brand: an adequate strategy of contents can help to give online relevance to the brand.
- Enjoy greater authority as a brand: the Social Media is a channel to impact the clients and offer them reasons to be the chosen.
- Easy way to find new customers and expand the audience: the consumers use the social networks to find new products and the companies need to know how to awake the desire to know more about the brand.
- Ability to search for and communicate with potential employees: the appearance of the new web site like LinkedIn has been seen as a great enhancement in the employee recruitment.
- Decrease the marketing costs: the social networks are not free, but the price of a Social Media strategy is notably lower than one through traditional channel.

Also there is a main disadvantage, stated by Chaffey and Ellos-Chadwick (2012) who said that Social Media requires a significant initial investment, which does not guarantee the success of the campaign, if it fails, the investment will be wasted.

When some company wants to develop online communication strategy, firstly the companies should consult the available frameworks, worksheets or guidelines (dragonvaragic.com, 2016). Ross Dawson (rossdawsonblog.com, 2009) has written on his web page a “guidance and a frame on how organizations can approach engaging the social media” . Therefore, according to Ross Dawson (2009) the Social Media strategy framework start with the step of “learn” and follows to two simultaneous flows and each one shows the three steps in the process, of “engagement” (listen, engage in conversation and measure and refine) and “strategy development” (prioritize objectives, establish governance and define activities) and come together in the ongoing to develop capabilities. The three key points of the first step (learn) are the use of social media, the study of relevant case studies and explore the latest trends (Dawson, 2009). So after that, the first step is that the company
Identifies the relevant social media, monitoring tools and learning which way is the best to discover what the clients said about the company and its market. At the same time, the company is improving the customer engagement, enhancing the brand and reputation and increasing the sales (Dawson, 2009). The second one is the engage in conversation providing relevant content to engage with influencers and to respond positively. On the other hand, on the strategy development is to establish governance, identifying opportunities and setting clear the social media policies (Dawson, 2009). The third step is to measure, refine and define activities that mean that the company has to set relevant measure for success and establish responsibilities and time commitment. Finally, as the authors mentioned above, came the develop capabilities and it was necessary to establish a pilot program and develop a culture of responsible transparency (Dawson, 2009).

In conclusion, the key of the success using Social Media as a tool in marketing is to develop a proper strategy to ensure the effectiveness for business or marketing purposes (SMB Group, 2012). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) there are some different marketing and communication strategies regarding social media: collaborative projects (e.g. LinkedIn), blogs and microblogs (e.g. Twitter), media sharing sites (e.g. YouTube), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), and virtual social worlds and forums (e.g. Second Life). The overall strategy is important but also there are the strategies and tactics regarding the different channels and each platform offers a different set of benefits, so in the next table is recollected all the information of purpose, tactics, strategy and audience to get a visual idea about it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Linkedin</th>
<th>YouTube</th>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>Forums</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influence Official voice of Juniper Networks</td>
<td>Advocacy Primary social venue for technical audiences</td>
<td>Influence Hyper targeted influencer engagement</td>
<td>Influence Advocacy Secondary destination serving content to all domains</td>
<td>Influence Establish through leadership</td>
<td>Advocacy Primary source for most loyal technical supporters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactics</td>
<td>Allows companies to promote their products in short messages and it can contains hash tag or animated GIF that redirect customers to the product's website.</td>
<td>It allows a product to provide videos, photos and longer descriptions and testimonials as other followers can comment on the product pages for others to see.</td>
<td>Through the use of widgets, member can promote their various social networking activities, such as Twitter stream or blogs, onto their LinkedIn profile page.</td>
<td>The video should be to prequalify views and send fully interested prospects on to your website to learn more about your products and services.</td>
<td>It allows a company to provide longer descriptions of product or services can include testimonials and can link to and from other social network and blog pages.</td>
<td>It provides something tangible that people can immediately put a use to solve their doubts or problems, and there is a reference if the client wants to go deep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Direct engagement with top influencers</td>
<td>Premium access model to build advocacy with technical audience</td>
<td>Leverage skills and expertise data for influence mapping and targeted groups</td>
<td>Connect content creation to strategy, Optimize presence</td>
<td>Expand blogging presence, improve platform, dramatically increase blogs &amp; bloggers</td>
<td>Grow existing community; scale exclusive content model; connect to Facebook advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target audience</td>
<td>Influencers, media/analysts, customers, partners</td>
<td>Technical users, certification, customers, developers</td>
<td>Influencers, advocates current/future employees</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Chief experience officers, advocates, influencers</td>
<td>Advocates, influencers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Social Media Site Comparison: Sources of content: www.socialmediaexaminer.com and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Portada

3. Methodology

3.1 Method

Somekh and Lewin (2005, p.346) define methodology as “the collection of methods or rules by which a particular piece of research is undertaken” and it includes the “principles, theories and values that underpin a particular approach to research”. Then, in this chapter
is presented the method, type of research, population and sample as well as the instrument to collect data used in this research.

3.1.1 Research strategies

Saunders et al. (2007, p.600) defined research strategy as “the general plan of how the researcher will go about answering the research questions”. Hence, the appropriate research strategy has to be selected based on research questions and objectives and the extent of existing knowledge on the subject are to be researched. (Saunders et al, 2007). According to Singh (2007), case study research can accommodate two different research techniques and these are the quantitative and qualitative researches approach.

As Clissett (2008, p. 100) said, “qualitative research covers a wide range of approaches for the exploration of human experience, perceptions, motivations and behaviors” and it is concerned with the collection and analysis of words whether in the form of speech or writing. Moreover, Silverman (2001, p.32) has stated that “researchers who use the qualitative method for their work commonly believe that they can provide a ‘deeper’ comprehension about the social phenomena.”

However, according to Babbie (2010, p.151) “a quantitative research study has the goal to determine the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent outcome variable within a population”. This population is not fully interviewed but only a part, which is called the sample. In addition, according to Creswell (1994) has given a very concise definition of quantitative research that is based on analyze the numerical data through the use of mathematical methods.

Qualitative research can have several forms: interview structured focus groups, or observation. These different tools are applicable in face to face, by phone or by the Internet (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996). On the contrary, in quantitative method, researchers use different tools, such as questionnaires or equipment to collect numerical data. The main objective of this kind of research is to provide precise measurement and analysis of target concepts (Miles, 1994).
3.1.2 Choice of the research method

In order to determine which method was the best for the investigation, we had to know which one give us better information to answer our purpose. The objectives of each of the two researches have been described before, so regarding our subject the best way to answer the research question was using qualitative research. To understand what the companies do the low season some facts have to be studied first, such as the marketing strategies used in this period of the year.

3.2 Type of research

According to Aaker & Day (1990), he mentioned that there are researchers who identified three main type of researchers: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory.

3.2.1 Exploratory research

Exploratory research might involve a literature search and conducting focus group interviews. So it does not intend to offer final and conclusive solution to existing problems, it is conducted in order to determine the nature of the problem, to find out “what is happening”, to ask questions and to analyze solutions from another perspective (Saunders et al, 2007).

Exploratory research “tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done” (Brown, 2006, p.43). Furthermore, it is necessary to add “that exploratory research is the initial research, which forms the basis more conclusive research. “It can even help in determining the research design, sampling methodology and data collection method” (Singh, 2007, p.64).

Moreover, that one often relies on secondary research such as reviewing available data. It can be also found on the Internet that actually is an effective way to gather data thanks to web search engines, such as Emerald Insight. For this paper secondary data was used. Ones which have already been collected is the study of “Mallorca más que Sol y Playa” by PWC, Plan Integral de Turismo, or some digitals channels like Hosteltur or Caib (Govern de les Illes Balears).
3.2.2 Descriptive research

Descriptive research was made after collect all the models and theories on the secondary data. According to Aggarwal, (2008), descriptive research is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation.

The goal is to accurately describe the information based on population and determined in time (Zikmund, 2000). It is also to collect as much information as possible to really understand the phenomenon.

3.2.3 Causal - Explanatory research

According to Emory & Cooper (1999), causal or explanatory research is conducted in order to identify the extent and nature of cause-and-effect relationships. The primary purpose of causal research is to explain why phenomena occur and to predict future occurrences. These studies are characterized by research hypotheses that specify the nature and direction of the relationships between or among variables being studied. Experiments are the most popular primary data collection methods in studies with causal research design.

Causal research design offers the following advantages: They may play an instrumental role in terms of identifying reasons behind a wide range of processes, as well as, assessing the impacts of changes on existing norms, processes and so on.

3.2.4 Choice of the types of research

This investigation used the explorative research and the descriptive research. The first one is “the initial research, which forms the basis of more conclusive research” (Singh, 2007, p.64). So, it was conducted in order to determine the nature of the problem. The second one has been selected to collect and analyze the data. It is very common in the tourism area, for three reasons (Veal, 2006): the newness of the field, the changing nature of the phenomenon being studied, and the frequency separation between research and action.


3.3 Population and sample

According to Bryman and Bell (2007), a population is the universe of people from which the sample has to be selected. The sample is the segment of the population that is chosen for investigation. The population chosen for this research is entrepreneurs and businesses related to tourism and Social Media of Mallorca.

As Thyer (2010) said, the sampling process divides the population into different segments. This process is the use of several methods that allows marketers to identify a group of people, objects or phenomena that will be used to represent the total population (Thyer, 2010). This sample must be representative, meaning that the whole population should be represented (Greetham, 2009). The reliability and also the conclusions drawn after depend upon this selection and also upon the size of the sample. As Churchill & Iacobucci (2002) mentioned, sampling methods are classified as either random and non-randomly.

3.3.1 Random sample

It provides the most valid or credible results because they reflect the characteristics of the population from which they are selected. According to Greetham (2009), the most reliable sample selection is randomly. However, even if this author states that random sampling is more relevant when the population is homogeneous.

3.3.2 Non-random sample

It is less desirable than the random sample (Sweetland, 1972). Non-randomly sampling is a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected (Explorabale.com, 2016). All non-randomly samples rely on personal judgment somewhere in the process and can be done according to different methods, such as the convenience sample, the judgment sample and the quota sample. (Sweetland, 1972). In addition, this kind of sampling is often divided into four primary categories: quota sampling, judgment sampling, convenience sampling and snowball sampling (Battaglia, 2008).
3.3.2.1 Convenience sampling

Malhotra (2010, p. 379) argues that the convenience sampling “attempts to obtain a sample of convenient elements. Often, respondents are selected they happen to be in the right place at the right time”. This is the least costly and least time-consuming of the sampling techniques (Malhotra, 2010). A big advantage is that the sampling units are easy to access and easy to measure.

3.3.2.2 Judgment sampling

According to Malhotra (2010, p.379), the judgment sampling is a “form of convenience sampling in which the population elements are selected based on the judgment of the researcher”. Other authors defined the judgment sampling when the participants are chosen because the researcher feels that they will meet the requirements of the study (Hair, Brush and Ortinau, 2003).

3.3.2.3 Quota sampling

According to Battaglia (2008, p.523), “the basic idea is to set a target number of completed interviews with specific subgroups of the population of interest”. However, Malhotra (2014) described that the quota sampling as a two-stage judgmental process. The first one involves developing a control category of the population elements. The second one, judgmental or convenience sampling is then used for the selection of the sample elements.

3.3.2.4 Snowball sampling

This method involves “identifying prospective respondents who can then help to researcher to identify additional people who are part of the population of interest to take part in the study” (Hair, Brush and Ortinau 2003, p.351).

3.3.3 Choice of sampling method

For this project a non-randomly sample is used and more precisely the judgment sample, also known as purposive, and it was defined by Ashley Crossman (2014) as one that is
selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study since the
chosen companies are some of the most important ones in the tourism sector, they have a
strong relation with the new technologies and all respondents are working on the area of
marketing or they are member of the CEO. Also a convenience sample is used since the
researchers have some kind of relationship with the interviewees.

The sample elements are selected by seven companies dedicated to tourism, but they offer a
different kinds of products and services. They are:

1. Alonso Hernández, Comercial Manager of Intetur Hotels. We have chosen this
hotel chain because all its hotels are situated in Palmanova and as ADS Mallorca
(2016) said “it is one of the first purpose-built tourist destinations on the island,
catering for all tastes” (adsmallorca.com, 2016). The town is frequented by a “range
of socio-economic groups” due to the proximity with both the city of Palma and
Magaluf (Boyko, 2015). Moreover, the city has grown to become a major holiday
destination for Europeans, including many Spanish and British pensioners, because
of the advent of low cost airlines and package holidays (Boyko, 2015).

2. Catalina Matas, partner of Unics. We have chosen this company because they offer a
different product of Mallorca besides sun and beach holidays, such as specialty tour
in organizing events, business trip, and incentive travel. In addition, it has its own
production of sport activities for groups, especially to enhance training course with
activities of team building. So we thought that it could be interesting to know its
opinion and evolution in the low season with the Social Media.

3. Daniel Toja, Marketing Manager and Ecommerce of BG Hotels. We have chosen
this hotel chain since its hotels are distributed among the most important Balearic
Islands, Mallorca and Ibiza and these are the Islands which suffer greatly the
problems of the seasonality so they have to develop strategies to face this problem.

4. Diego Zafortega, president of the “Asociación Cultural Patrimonio Histórico del
Mediterráneo” (ACPHM). We have chosen this association since it is an alternative
activity to cope the seasonality and through some questions we can know how it
develops this idea to succeed and it wants to achieve a local development based on the history, the life and the gastronomy of the rural historic properties from Mallorca.

5. Tolo Sbert, General Manager of Cursach group. We have chosen this company since it is related with different sectors of the Island and it is interesting to know how all sectors are affected and how the company faces the problem of the low season.

6. Tomeu Bennasar, General Manager of Logitravel. We have chosen this company because it is an online company strongly related with the tourism and the company has a great market. We think to study its strategies through the Social Media in the low season is important.

7. Xesc Vives, General Manager and owner of Mar i Vent Hotel. We have chosen this company because it is situated in the municipality of Banyalbufar and it lies next to the Serra de Tramuntana, which in 2011 joined the World Heritage List of the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) (unesco.org, 2016). The type of tourist that they receive it is not who wants only “Sun and Beach”, also who are interested in the environment and nature and the researchers think that study this company could be interesting.

3.4 Instrument to collect the data

Data collection instrument are used to conduct the study. Data collection techniques allow us to systematically collect information about our objects of study and about the settings in which they occur (Chaleunvong, 2009). Data is divided into primary and secondary.

First of all, to know the impact of the Social Media in the tourism companies look for some secondary data was the first step. Secondary data is information that has already been published and collected for another purpose but has some relevance and utility for the research (Pérez-Sindin López, 2013). The secondary data permits a better problem understanding and are it is the most convenient and cost-effective option. This kind of data
can be found through several articles and books or even in Internet (Emory & Cooper, 1991).

In accordance with Churchill (1995, p.215), “do not bypass secondary data. Begin with secondary data, and only when secondary data are exhausted or show diminishing returns, proceed to primary data”. Sometimes they provide enough information to answer the research questions and is not necessary to collect primary data. However, in this case, it was not enough with the secondary data because the main problem was that we found a lot of information about how the Social Media influences the tourism sector, also related to the problem of the seasonality but as the researchers explained before, the data had been collected for the purpose of someone else, so that they can answer the problem perfectly and the problem of accuracy plays an important role in this part of the project.

Among the secondary data, it can be found the internal and external data. The first one can be defined as “originate within the firm” (Churchill, 2005, p.173) and the external as the one originates from outside sources. The secondary data has been arranged from books, studies and articles found in Halmstad University library and several databases.

As it was previously argued, secondary data cannot be sufficient to help answering the topic. Thus, the authors needed as well to use primary data which can be defined as information that you collect specifically for the purpose of your research project. An advantage of primary data is that it is specifically tailored to your research needs. (Emory & Cooper, 1991).

The case study based on Yin (1984) to collect the primary data, because it is the investigation of the some specific instances of tourism companies that comprise the cases in the study (Rose, Spinks and Canhoto, 2015). The main types of case study can be identified on: research design (Yin, 1984) and research purpose. Hence, there are some typologies of research design such as embedded analysis, holistic analysis, single case design and multiple case design (Yin, 1984).

For this investigation was used a multiple case study. According to Campbell & Ahrens (1998, p.537), it enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases.
The goal is to replicate findings across bases. Other common features of multiple case study includes (Gomm 2000, Yin 2009): in-depth interview of a small number of cases and these are studied in their real-life context and also these are naturally occurring in the sense that they are not manipulated as in an experiment.

To administer the interviews different contact methods have been studied, for instance: email or telephone since we are in Sweden and the face-to-face interaction was impossible. First, for cost reasons, the most used method was email, thanks to the internet a lot of emails can be sent for free. After this first step and when we made sure about who was going to help us we proceed to the phone calls to specific aspects and to gain more detailed information and the possibility to add some questions during the calls.

The following data was used to present each company. It is necessary to know which online communication strategies they use and understand their presence on social networks. In addition the authors analyze the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats of each company.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of online information</th>
<th>Online reviews, social publishing, bookmarking sites, discussion forums, media sharing networks, e-commerce, personal networks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online communication tool</td>
<td>Online advertising, online sales promotion, online public relations, online direct marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online advertising</td>
<td>Google AdWords (pay-per-click advertising), banner advertising, newsletter advertising, affiliate marketing, social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online sales promotion</td>
<td>Coupons, refunds, premiums, loyalty programs, discounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online public relations</td>
<td>Product publicity, corporate communications, press relations and counselling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2: Information data of the online communication strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online direct marketing</th>
<th>Email marketing, SEM, SEO, teaser campaign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of social media</td>
<td>Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Google+, blogs, forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the company do in its social networks?</td>
<td>Share photos, videos, promotions, positive comments and relevant information about the firm and about each hotel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.5 Quality of the research

##### 3.5.1 Reliability

The objective of the reliability is to know that the method of data gathering produces consistent and stable results (Wren, 2005). To obtain as few mistakes as possible it is necessary to carry out some steps. To increase the reliability and the accuracy of this research, the authors have carried out some actions like to keep handwritten data of each telephone call and also the social networks of the companies have been observed and studied by the researchers.

##### 3.5.2 Validity

The concept of validity in qualitative studies has created some debates. Some researchers said that the term of validity is not applicable to qualitative studies but at the same time they highlight the importance of a method to check the research (Golafshani, 2003). In order to increase the level of validity, our respondents could make additional comments in the calls regarding the subject to have more information to answer the research question. Also to add more validity the authors interviewed top managers of the company.
4. Empirical study

The following section will precisely be the seven different case studies about the concerned companies. All the information is extracted from the original web sites of the related companies.

4.1 Intertur Hotels

The group of Intertur hotels started since the early sixties. The areas where they develop its activity is, firstly, hospitality and, secondly, construction. The latter is a consequence of the first and arises from the need to adjust costs and delays in the execution of the buildings.

This company has six hotels around Mallorca and Ibiza. They are next to quiet beaches for tourists that want to enjoy the Mediterranean as desired. The five hotels are:

- Intertur Hotel Hawaii Ibiza**** (San Antonio, Ibiza)
- Intertur Apartamentos Miami Ibiza (Santa Eulàlia, Ibiza)
- Intertur Hotel Miami Ibiza *** (Santa Eulàlia, Ibiza)
- Intertur Hotel Hawaii Mallorca & Suites **** (Palmanova, Mallorca)
- Intertur Palmanova Bay *** (Palmanova, Mallorca)
- Intertur Apartamentos Waikiki (Palmanova, Mallorca)

This company is present on the Internet through their web pages, both cooperative and individual of the hotels. In the web page you can find information with the hotel facilities and also there is an online chat where you can ask questions to the employees and they give you an answer in few minutes. Also you can find online sales promotions such as offers of each hotel, which are different. For example, during the month of May in Intertur Palmanova Bay there is a discount of a 5% and in the Hotel Hawaii Mallorca & Suites a child stay is free.

Its main online communication tool is the online advertising where the company tries to reach to customers through the program of Google, Google adwords, newsletters, banner advertising and affiliate marketing. Intertur collaborates with a blog called “Prensa y
company uses email marketing. The hotel chain is also present on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram and Google+ and also you can make questions through its social networks where Intertur is very active uploading photos, information regarding the hotel or events in Mallorca and videos. Moreover its videos on YouTube have more than 5,000 views.

The biggest strength of the hotels is that they are present on the social networks and the customer can reach to them easier. The weakness is that they do not offer an alternative product and also for its situation in Mallorca, so the hotel chain has to close in the low season. On the other hand, as the company is active on Internet, it would be good to continue this interest in the low season for extending the high season and to participate in the great events that some companies are promoting and these are very successful for the Island. The threat is that other hotel chains are promoting alternatives products to survive in the low season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of online information</th>
<th>Online reviews, social publishing, bookmarking sites, discussion forums, media sharing networks, e-commerce, personal networks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online communication tool</td>
<td>Online advertising, online sales promotion, online public relations, online direct marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online advertising</td>
<td>Google AdWords (pay-per-click advertising), banner advertising, newsletter advertising, affiliate marketing, social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online sales promotion</td>
<td>Loyalty programs, discounts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online public relations</td>
<td>Product publicity, corporate communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online direct marketing</td>
<td>Email marketing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.2 Unics

Unics is a full service-incoming agency that puts its emphasis on cooperation travel and outdoor activities. Unics started its operation in 1999 and today is one of the leading providers of these activities on the Island. It designs team building events, outdoor adventure activities, tailor made trips, expeditions, incentive travel, conference energizers, fun events and outdoor activity events for corporate groups, public sector, educational and other organizations.

The company, as expert for outdoors and teambuilding activities, has its own guide team and outdoor center to provide the whole event program from one source. Due these features, the company can create very individual and tailor made travel programs. It possess an international staff who can offer the services in different languages as Spanish, Catalan, German and English.

The philosophy of the company is clear: it wants to create exciting and individualized activities. Unics uses its mother nature as its medium to create unforgettable events since Mallorca offers a fantastic landscape with alpine like mountains, deep canyons, beautiful beaches and the Mediterranean Sea.

This company is present on Internet through its Website, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Google+. Also it has its own blog where it is possible to share experiences. It is important to underline that the company is present but not very active, because its strategy is that they would rather take better care of its customers than promote the company through the social media. However they use newsletter advertising and loyalty programs for the affiliate customers. So Unics is present on Internet with the basic information and some offers.
Furthermore, the relation of the company with the SWOT analysis is that the main strength is the product that it is offering, a different product (activities and incentives); the weakness is its presence on internet because it is not developing as much as it can; as an opportunity could be to offer its product through the social media to reach more customers; the threat is the development of alternative destinations such as some islands of the Caribbean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of online information</th>
<th>Online reviews, social publishing, bookmarking sites, media sharing networks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online communication tool</td>
<td>Online advertising, online sales promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online advertising</td>
<td>Newsletter Advertising, Social Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online sales promotion</td>
<td>Loyalty programs and discounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of social media</td>
<td>LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Google+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the company do in its social networks?</td>
<td>Share photos and some relevant information about the firm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4: Online communication strategies of Unics*

### 4.3 BG Hotels

It is a Balearic hotel chain, which started its operation in 1996, and today is composed by six hotels distributed between Mallorca and Ibiza. These establishments, recently renovated, are:

- Portinatx Beach Club Hotel, **** (Portinatx Bay, North of Ibiza).
- Hotel Náutico Ebeso, **** (South of Ibiza).
- Hotel Java, **** (Platja de Palma, Mallorca).
- Hotel Pamplona, **** (Platja de Palma, Mallorca).
- Hotel Caballero, **** (Platja de Palma, Mallorca).
• Hotel Tonga Tower Design Hotel, **** (Alcúdia Bay, Mallorca).

The main objective of the company is the construction and the operation of hotels in the national territory, as well as the exercise and the development of complementary activities to the exploitation of accommodation establishments.

This company is present on Internet through a general web page but also with a web page of each hotel where you can make bookings, send messages with doubts, check offers and there are photos with the hotel facilities. Also they are present on forums like TripAdvisor where managers reply the complaints of the clients since they are interested in the point of view of them to take advantage to know what they want or how to improve.

In addition, BG Hotel uses the platforms of Facebook and Google+ to share some activities of the hotel, thus to reach more customers. About the online communication tools, the company highlights the importance of the development of SEO and SEM strategies. The company develops online communication strategies such as Google AdWords, newsletter, loyalty programs and product publicity. Besides the services of tourism, the company also presents on its web site alternative products such as events, wellness and cycling, so that helps BG Hotels in the low season because customers can see alternative activities.

The strengths of the hotel chain is the position of them, some are closer to the city center or the airport and others in a tourist area, so they have a wide range of clients, offering products with high quality or specials programs for senior tourism or sport tourism. The biggest weakness is the competition between the hotel chains, because in the areas that the hotels are, they do not have exclusivity so there is strong competition. As an opportunity, would be great to develop more strategies for tourist in the low season such as trekking and golf. The weakness is that there are others hotels closer to Palma and there is where the tourism is more active in the low season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of online information</th>
<th>Online reviews, social publishing, bookmarking sites, discussion forums, media sharing networks, e-commerce, personal networks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online communication tool</td>
<td>Online advertising, online sales promotion, online public relations, online direct marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online advertising</td>
<td>Google AdWords (pay-per-click advertising), banner advertising, newsletter advertising, social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online sales promotion</td>
<td>Refunds, loyalty programs, coupons discounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online public relations</td>
<td>Product publicity, corporate communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online direct marketing</td>
<td>Email marketing, SEM, SEO, teaser campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of social media</td>
<td>Facebook and Google+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the company do in its social networks?</td>
<td>Share photos, promotions and relevant information about the firm and about each hotel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Online communication strategies of BG Hotels

4.4 Asociación Cultural Patrimonio Histórico del Mediterráneo (ACPHM)

This association tries to highlight the importance of the cultural heritage of Mallorca through routes based on guided tours exploring some cottages and “fincas”. It wants to offer a different point of view, discovering the plural richness of Mallorca through a sustainable tourism. It tries to explain the history of the Island by means of the heritage of the ancestors.

The association wants to promote the cultural tourism introducing these routes for the history and the culture of Mallorca. Also it tries to arouse the interest of the clients by the cultural heritage of the area.

The project "Itinerem: ruta histórica por las grandes fincas rurales del Mediterráneo" is being studied to be recognized with the Cultural Route of the European Council. This title
will be not only a resource for the development of tourism products, also a platform for the innovation and the creativity of small companies, products and services.

The company is almost new and they are starting with the social networks. However, the ACPHM has the web site since April of 2015 and they are still working on the contents and the offers. Actually it is an online promotion tool and it does not have presence on the social networks.

Additionally, the greatest strength is the product and services that the company offers for a cultural tourism and it can face up to the low season. The weakness is that they are not present in the social networks yet and this can affect to the future customers. As an opportunity if they work and share the activities and events that the association does through the social media it could reach more customers. The threats of the company is that managers have to develop a great strategies for the clients to offers an attractive product because, as we know, the main tourists of the Island prefer sun and beach holidays.

4.5 Grupo Cursach

Grupo Cursach is a leading familiar business in Mallorca, which belongs to the segment of leisure and entertainment mostly related to the music, hotels, restaurants, sport and wellness.

All brands of the company are well positioned and they have a strong presence in the national and international market. These brands are: BH Mallorca Hotel, BCM Hotel, BCM, Tito’s, Pachá, Megapark, Megarena, Paradies, Asadito, Linos, Wurstkonig, 800º celsius STEAK HOUSE, Megasport y Megahealth. Cursach group is composed by four business divisions: Cursach Hotel, Cursach Entertainment, Cursach Wellness and Cursach Restaurants.

The commitment of the group is the pursuit of the excellence and the promotion of new offers of responsible leisure that provided value to Mallorca and the promotion of sustainable tourism. Nowadays, it is working on the transformation of Magaluf into a higher quality destination both for youth and families.
Grupo Cursach works during whole year making foreign promotion in countries as England, Germany and Italy, as well as in cities of Spain through events sponsored by its brands.

This company is using Internet to know the interests of customers allowing them to create the content to satisfy better their needs. For this reason there are a web page of each brand, where the customers can interact with the managers through directly messages or on forums. Furthermore, all the brands try to build a personal network and there are specialized employees who are working with its social media networks, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, to achieve an interaction.

In addition, the company tries to take advantage using the Internet through the online sales promotions since there are periodically offers on the different web sites with discounts, different kind of loyalty programs depending on the brand and the possibility of refunds in the web page of each brand. As online advertising, this company promotes its services through newsletter, banner advertisements and being present on the main social media networks like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Cursach Grupo is very active and it is possible to find important information, photos and videos. The company sends email marketing to achieve an effective direct marketing and also it is working with the tourism magazine Hosteltur as a kind of online public relation.

Furthermore, the strength of the company is that its presence on different sectors, as it is mentioned before, so it suffers the seasonality because some hotels close in the low season but the company has other companies to face up to this problem. The weakness is that in the low season they do not offer any product as an alternative to foreign clients, only to local residents. The opportunity is that the company has some infrastructures to do it and also it is a big company that everyone knows in the Island for its nightclubs, so the development of it could be easier for them. The threat is that the company has many competencies because it is present in several sectors so it has to be careful with the competition.
### Table 6: Online communication strategies of Grupo Cursach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of online information</th>
<th>Online reviews, social publishing, bookmarking sites, discussion forums, media sharing networks, e-commerce, personal networks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online communication tool</td>
<td>Online advertising, online sales promotion, online public relations, online direct marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online advertising</td>
<td>Banner advertising, newsletter advertising, social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online sales promotion</td>
<td>Discounts, loyalty programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online public relations</td>
<td>Product publicity, press relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online direct marketing</td>
<td>Email marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of social media</td>
<td>Facebook, Instagram and Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the company do in its social networks?</td>
<td>The company shares photos, videos, promotions, positive comments and relevant information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.6 Logitravel

Logitravel is an online travel agency focus on holidays, offering a large range of travel products and services: holiday packages, Atlantic and Mediterranean islands, Caribbean beaches, ski, rural tourism, flights and car hire.

The company was founded in 2004 and its main goal is to satisfy the needs of a growing niche within the market by providing an aggressive price policy and a wide range of products.

Logitravel is an international company operating in 8 markets: Spain, Italy, Germany, Portugal, France, Brazil, UK and Finland and in the few years it will try to establish in the following markets: USA, Columbia, Venezuela, Holland, Sweden and Norway. Over the
past nine years, Logitravel has experienced a strong and sustained growth, and nowadays it is one of the three most important online travel agencies in Spain and also one of the fastest growing in Europe.

The company is present on the Internet through its web page where you can book the services online. Also on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The company develops an online advertising with a proactive advertising on Facebook and YouTube, Google AdWords, newsletters and it also launches affiliate programs that it is possible to find on its web page. However, they are also using the online sales promotion since the Web is full of offers, promotions and discounts and coupons. Then, to use correctly the direct marketing, this company uses SEM, SEO, email marketing and it develops teaser campaigns to create a desire.

Moreover, the company is very active on the social media uploading photos, videos, relevant information and also positive comments of customers. Logitravel is interested in to know and to understand the different needs of the customers and the managers are always looking the online reviews and the discussion forums to know how improve its services. For this reason people can ask questions through Facebook or forums like Tripadvisor and managers respond the same day.

Additionally, the strengths and opportunities are related because Logitravel is a company that is really known in Spain and it is starting in Europe, so it has a good market of different products and customers that the company can use as an opportunity to growth. The weakness is that the firm suffers seasonality so it is trying to offer a sport and urban tourism. As a threats is that the web site has to be very clear and easy to find what the customers are looking for, because the sales of the company are only online and nowadays, the clients know different pages with the same or similarly products and services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of online information</th>
<th>Online reviews, bookmarking sites, discussion forums, media sharing networks, e-commerce, personal networks.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online communication tool</td>
<td>Online advertising, online sales</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

44
Table 7: Online communication strategies of Logitravel

| Type of social media                  | Twitter, Facebook, YouTube |

| What does the company do in its social networks? | The company shares photos, videos, promotions, positive comments and relevant information. |

4.7 Mar i Vent Hotel

In 1931, Juan Vives and Margarita Alberti founded the Hotel Mar i Vent. They used the privileged position of the home family, with its views to the sea and to the mountains. It is a family company that has been passed down through the generations. Nowadays, more than eighty years after since it was founded, hotel guests receive a welcome and friendly attention from the fourth generation Vives.

This hotel has its own web page where potential customers can take a look of alternative activities during the winter, like hiking or cycling, and its facilities. Through its web page you cannot make bookings, you have to send an email or call. Also you can find this hotel in the main social network, Facebook where it is very active uploading photos or sharing positive comments and relevant information. The managers of the hotel respond the messages and the complaints that they see on the forums or those that have been sent by its web page quickly and they develop online advertising to take advantage of the new online tools.
This hotel has the strength of this situation because it permits to have a quality tourism, both in high and low season, so it would be an opportunity to communicate all the services and products that the company offers, such as hiking tourism, through the social media to reach more customers. On the other hand, the company is not using the Internet as much as they can to obtain the maximum benefit, because the customers cannot make bookings through its web page, as it is explained above. The threat is that the village of the hotel is really small because the population is only 517 (wikipedia.com, 2016) and there are ten hotels so the company needs to develop an attractive and alternative product to reach more customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of online information</th>
<th>Online reviews, social publishing, bookmarking sites, discussion forums, media sharing networks.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online communication tool</td>
<td>Online advertising, online public relations, online direct marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online advertising</td>
<td>Social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online public relations</td>
<td>Interact with customers through messages on forums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online direct marketing</td>
<td>Email marketing and direct advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of social media</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the company do in its social networks?</td>
<td>The company shares photos, positive comments and relevant information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Online communication strategies of Mar i Vent Hotel

5. Empirical analysis

In this chapter the authors have related the theoretical framework with the empirical data in order to provide an answer to our purpose
5.1 Situational analysis

Firstly, related to the SWOT analysis and through the interviews we can see a relation between the theory and the practice. The hotel chain of Intertur Hotels and also BG Hotels have hotels situated in an area where the main tourists are looking for sun and beach holidays, so “the company suffers seasonality as its major weakness” (Hernández, 2016), for instance, Xesc Vives, of Hotel Mar i Vent, mentioned that “the billing data from November to April assume the 12% - 15% of the whole year”. The same is happening in Logitravel, its “profitability is focused on the three months of the summer, because the volume of these three months is multiplied by three” (Bennasar, 2016). Similarly, the company of Cursach suffers the seasonality with “the tourism businesses that remain closed on the low season, but at least we have our companies which are directed to the resident public as gymnasiums and discotheques” (Sbert, 2016) which are open the whole year. This seasonality is a consequence of the temperature and weather of the winter as a weakness of Mallorca and Mr. Hernández said that “our clients prefer other destinations like the Canarias Islands” because they have a better climate on winter, as it is explained in the literature review as a threat of Mallorca.

On the other hand, Diego Zaforteza, the president of the Asociación Cultural Patrimonio Histórico del Mediterráneo, mentioned that his company “will suffer seasonality” because it is a new company and the mangeros do not know how it will work. Likewise, Unics does not have this problem, because it offers 5 products in the low season such as business tourism, however, for that company, “the low season is the months of July, August, September and December” (Matas, 2016).

There are companies which offer a different product during their low seasons to confront this problem but in the case of Intertur Hotels and Cursach they decide to do not offer any product during these season and do not develop strategies. Alonso Hernández (Intertur Hotels) explained that his company does not see an opportunity since he considers that there are some problems like “the shortage of flights from national and international airports and the low demand of sun and beach”. BG Hotels offers the same product but with different strategies because they “kept open the hotels which are closely of the airport and the city center” (Toja, 2016). Otherwise, the other companies, that we could interview, confront the problem offering an alternative product. For example, Catalina Matas (Unics)
described the other option as a “sport tourism and business tourism” just as Tomeu Bennasar said that “Mallorca it is consolidating as sport and urban tourism”. Diego Zaforteza (ACPHM) mentioned a different accommodation, like rural hotel, and tourism experiences such as show cooking, wine tasting, horse trails and hiking. As well as Mar i Vent Hotel “hiking is its strong point” for its location but also the business tourism because “they have a room for those customers who want to conduct meetings or training activities for the company” (Vives, X., 2016).

In conclusion, we could see the real problem of the seasonality and how it affects on their firms. However, a question that we asked to them and in our opinion is really important is what marketing strategies are carried out in their company to cope with the seasonality. Firstly, the companies of Unics, Cursach and Intertur do not use any different marketing strategies in the low season. Tolo Sbert (Cursach) and Alonso Hernández (Intertur Hotel) clarify that it is a consequence of the “lack of flights in the low season” and another consequence for the last company is that its hotels are in a “zone where during the winter the activity is almost zero and there are not attractive destinations”. Secondly, Logitravel and BG Hotels adjust their prices in the low season and adapt the product to the customer type, for instance, they enhance the cyclist activity and try to focus on it to reach the customer. Another example is that Logitravel based its strategy to advancing the sales process with campaigns pre-sale through offers on the newspaper Ultima Hora and BG Hotels maintains the hotels which are closer to the city center opened, because there are more touristic activity. Thirdly, Mar i Vent Hotel and ACPHM promote an alternative tourist packages in the low season as we mentioned before through trade fairs or specialized agencies and in their official web pages the customers can look for the gastronomic, trekking or cyclist tourism, the best-selling types in the low season.

5.2 Marketing Communication Strategies

According to Duncan & Moriarty (1998) the communication helps companies to focus on the needs and wants of customers and it is necessary to build strong relationships with them. To obtain this communication all the interviewed companies have developed some promotion strategies based on the online communication since it is more personal than traditional marketing channels because of it enables companies to be in direct contact with
their customers (Sbert, Cursach group). For this reason all these companies are present on Internet, first this presence was as a Web 1.0 where they only facilitated information about their companies but with the evolution of the Internet they had to change the way to communicate.

Nowadays, you can book a service through the web pages of Inturtur Hotels, BG Hotels, Logitravel and Mar i Vent Hotel and as Alonso Hernández. (Inturtur Hotels) stated “the Web 2.0 is an important step as an interactive media with the clients and as a sale tool”. Also Tolo Sbert (Cursach Group) added that due to the Web 2.0, the clients are stronger and powerful than ever since they can interact and collaborate with the businesses creating content and giving opinions, tastes and so on. When the clients appreciate that they play an important role in the company they want to create relationships with companies and they have changed their habits, “every day customers have been dedicated more time to Internet, so companies need to do the same” (Bennasar, T. Logitravel). To improve the interaction with customers and to obtain marketing information about the preferences of their customers, all the interviewed companies have platforms on the most important social networks. All the companies, less ACPHM, have a strong presence on Facebook that nowadays is the most used around the world.

All of them develop online advertisements to deliver promotional marketing to clients. The newsletters are the most use since the people who receive the information are those customers who are interested in the company, its services, and its offers and so on. In the web pages of Inturtur, Unics, Bg Hotels, Grupo Cursach and Logitravel they perform online sales promotion strategies since as it is explained in the Empirical study their web pages are full of offers, discounts, possibility of refunds and so on. This kind of online communication produces an economic incentive and an emotional appeal that allows companies to increase their sales.

As it is explained in the Swot analysis, only Unics, Bg hotels, Logitravel and Mar i Vent offers an alternative product during the low season of Mallorca. Tomeu Bennasar (Logitravel) can appreciate a relationship between the evolution of the data of the seasonality and the growth of the Internet and its use in their marketing strategies. Unics prefer the word-of-mouth and according to Xesc Vives (Mar i Vent) the growth of the internet “is harmful since there is more information to compare and the customers have more variety”. Against this opinion, Tomeu Bennasar (Logitravel) believes that thanks to
have more information, people travel more and they have the possibility to find “last minute offers” from both, hotels and airlines, which is an advantage.

Related with the AIDAS model, “the transition to the new website was a very important step” (Hernández, Intertur Hotels) as a way to interact with the customers and achieve the attention and the interest of them. The social networks are a good way since their aim is to inform about the company and its products or services but the effectivity always depends on how every company handles it (Toja, BG Hotels). Twitter and Instagram can create these attention and interest due to the appearance of “hashtags” the possibility to be “trending topic” and so on. As your company is richer in content, much easier it is to go further and reach desire, action and satisfaction. Youtube and Facebook can be utilized to create desire, watching videos. If the customers have facilities when they have to book a service, for example directly through the web page, clients appreciate it (Vives, Mar I Vent). Furthermore, if the company takes care of its customers, it creates a level of satisfaction what results in recommendations to relatives, friends and other people through blogs, for example. Finally the company develops and reinforces relationships with customers, increasing sales.

In conclusion, all the respondents agree that the mixture of all channels helps companies to create better communication strategies to promote their products and services, and to get a strong competitive advantage.

The companies have to take into account that in order to sell a product or a service it is necessary to reach the segment of population that will most likely buy it. In terms of tourism in Mallorca, it is important to know that the profile of clients is clearly different and depends on the season, so the product, the price and the promotion has to be according to them. All the managers, through some studies made by their companies, have found differences between the clients in the low and high season. They agree that most of the clients in the low season are old people, maybe retired, who are interested in cultural destinations, gastronomy, nature activities or walk along the villages to explore the Island. Also there is sport tourism like golf, cycling and so on since Mallorca has the environment to offer this kind of sports. So this tourism is defined as “active tourism” (Matas, UNICS). Diego Zaforteza (ACPHM) goes further and he adds that the clients of the low season prefer good care, quality and comfort than lower prices. Also the main visitors are
Europeans, most specifically from Germany, United Kingdom and Italy (Zaforteza, ACPHM). Nevertheless, regarding the average stay, they disagree since all the companies less Logitravel and Mar I Vent Hotel believe that during the low season the stay is longer. Then, it is necessary to establish a price. In the case of the low season, most companies tend to reduce the prices to obtain longer stays (Toja, BG HOTELS).

Because of their main tourist in the low season is senior, the companies need to develop some traditional marketing apart from the online marketing describe above since these people are not very familiarized with the new communications. The most common tool used by these companies is the brochure in the tour operators but also they use the advertising in mass media, mainly press and radio.

5.3 Benefits of Social Media

The firms can used the social media to gain a new customers through the viral effect of it, to build or to strengthen relationship with them. The main objective of being on the social networks is to get closer to the customers. The social media is very successful to involve customers and the social networks are an effective, fast and low cost way to communicate and have an instantaneous response from the people. According to Tolo Sbert (Grupo Cursach) and Tomeu Bennasar (Logitravel), the social media is a good support to break the seasonality. In addition Tomeu Bennasar mentioned that “the social networks have a viral behavior that directly impacts the "inspirational" phase of the journey”. So he specified that it has helped them to “anticipate the time of purchase, to differentiate with different and creative products and services and to communicate, customize and take advantage of more sophisticated products and / or sophisticated”.

On the other side, the other companies interviewed think that the social media did not influence to the seasonality. For example, Cati Matas (Unics) explained that they “did not take advantage of social media”, they “are present but not very active”, because the new customers of them are from recommendations and most of them are previously customers,
so its strategy is to opt for better care of customers. Another one is Hotel Mar i Vent but it has helped them to “increase the income of the high season”. Daniel Toja (BG Hotels) affirms that “whatever is take advantage of the virality of images that show the activities the destination in general should reflect an increased impact on the destination and this generates bookings and reserves diminish seasonality”. That is why Alonso Hernández (Intertur Hotels) relates this concept with “other accommodations that have had a positive contribution by the ability to communicate events and related to activities undertaken or involved in hotels (sporting, cultural, dining, music, shopping, etc.) news. In this case, surely Facebook and Twitter are the most interesting channels, as each follower becomes in turn a prescriber”.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze how social media influence in the marketing communication strategies of companies from Mallorca with the aim of breaking the seasonality. The research question of this thesis was: “How the marketing strategies in social media are used by the companies in Mallorca to break the seasonality?” . In order to answer this question, the authors have analyzed the different online strategies used by the companies during the low season. Secondly, thanks to the obtained results in the interviews, it was found an evidence of the current situation where there is a need for changing the actual tourism model in Mallorca. That model is based on seasonality and it depends on a single product, “sun and beach”. Consequently to achieve this shift, it is necessary to modulate the demand curve.

We consider fundamental to understand that Social Media helps companies to create and reinforce the relationship with their clients. Now, the companies are able to maintain a direct contact with them, provide them with clearer and more useful information. However, this opportunity can suppose a greater competition for companies in the market, since customers can compare a set of different choices and opinions from other user and it is easier for them to change to another company. Companies need to perform well-developed marketing strategies if they want to obtain the customer satisfaction, which can be
translated into a better position against the competitors. Also, they need to take advantage of the virality of the images, videos, opinions and other tools, since it generates an increase in the impact of the tourism destination and for that reason; all the companies are present on the social networks.

We think that those companies who offer an alternative product in the low season make an effective use of the online marketing strategies. Since they are offering facilities and flexibility to customers it means an incentive for them. Nowadays, online advertising is the most effective tool taking into account that a huge number of the population receives this kind of advertisements. Therefore, the need to be on Social Media is a reality. We have seen how companies have evolved with the generations during the last decades. Every company has its own web site where the customers can find the necessary information, book their services, and so on.

Furthermore, we want to highlight the active presence of the companies on Facebook, from our point of view the most powerful social media network. Since everybody uses Facebook as well as Twitter, a company can upload photos or videos and with it, create a desire in the mind of the customer. In this way, it is easier to redirect to another URL (social network or platform) in order to be more visited by consumers and giving the product away. Moreover, their active presence on forums like TripAdvisor is a successful method, because the companies know what the previous clients exactly think and they can reply questions and complaints from previous and future customers, in other words, it is the best way to have an interaction with them. The same is happening with YouTube, where the firm can play “emotionally” with the feelings and experiences of the customers. In addition, the companies need to give their best because what they offer on the Web must meet the customer expectations, otherwise the online bad reputation will suppose a big problem for the firm.

As a conclusion, be present on Social Media can help to break seasonality, at least reducing its impact, because the companies can promote its product or service around the world. Without the promotion in this field, projects like Ironman 70.3 Alcúdia, the sailing race Trofeo Princesa Sofia, the cycling race 312 Mallorca and so on did not reach to gather a thousand of tourist as they achieve, all of them in the low season.
However we have found some geopolitical factors that affect companies heavily, like the lack of flights, and until the external problems are not solved the companies will continue suffering the consequences of the seasonality. However, the firms have to face up all these factors and try to do the best with what they have and promote and share it through the social networks, to get more interact with the customers and to achieve the online word-of-mouth.
6.1 Limitations

Some difficulties have been encountered during the writing-process of this thesis. The main difficulty was that there are not any study which linked the social media and the online communication tools as a solution to break the seasonality. It was sometimes hard to focus the project because there are a lot of theories about it, but when we have tried to relate it with the companies was quite difficult.

The study was just concentrated in Mallorca. Although that we are in Sweden, we could do it better because the interviews were not make face to face, so we have done it by email and some of them we could do it by a telephone call since with all companies we have a direct relationship. Furthermore, the external validity is a limitation of this study, due to the limited number of companies used in the case study, by having only seven case companies.

Finally, this thesis could deepen in every strategy that the company could use with the different social networks and platforms in order to answer our research question but this analysis required another frame of reference and a much deeper analysis.
6.2 Further studies

For further research, the authors suggest to analyze a large number of companies with different kind of products and services among all the sectors such as tourism, sport and hospitality and so on. This could help the research to be more specifically and find better solutions.

Moreover, this paper could be based on a quantitative approach focus on the behavior of the consumers and through questionnaires would be possible to know how they perceive the different online marketing promotion strategies and if they are effective.

In order to have another point of view, new research questions could be: the consumer perception of the online promotion during the low season;
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Appendix

The main questions of the interview:

1. Could you make a brief introduction about your company and which is your position in the organization?

2. Some years ago, the social networks were not as common as nowadays, so for promoting your company to the clients you had to use different communication channels, could you indicate which ones?

3. Nowadays, is your company present on the Internet and in the different social networks? If the answer is yes, since when and how?

4. To what extent has favored to the company its presence on the Web 2.0?

5. Do you consider that your company suffers seasonality? If the answer is yes, how does it affect?

6. Mallorca is a great power under the title “Sun and Beach”, which kind of product offers your company in the low season as an alternative?

7. Which is the difference between the profile of the low and high season client?

8. Which marketing strategies perform in your company to face the seasonality problem?

9. And now focusing on the low season, how does it evoluatione since your company is on the Web

10. As a last question and from your point of view, how the social media has influenced in the marketing strategies to break the seasonality?
My name is Aina Bernat and I am native from Mallorca. I wish to work in the marketing department in a near future, that is the reason why I wanted to relate something that I like with the main source of incomes of my birthplace, the tourism.

My name is Mar Amengual and I was born in Mallorca. This region is strongly related with tourism and also with the social media and I am interested in both topics.