Digital Brand Engagement

Assignment 2: Types of Brand Engagement on Instagram – city branding; Paris & Dubai

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Abstract

The main objective of this study, was to evaluate digital brand engagement regarding city branding through the online media platform Instagram. The two cities that were examined, analyzed and compared are Paris and Dubai. This is interesting because in this fashion the scope of a traditional brand is elaborated, hence the places are also a product, and because of it, a brand. According to Iconosquare, an online platform that tracks Instagram data, Paris and Dubai belong to the top ten strongest brand identities. Continuing with the objective of this study, this research will try to visualize how brands engage with the consumer and how the consumers engage with the brand. Finally, a conclusion and recommendation are provided relating to digital brand engagement strategy through Instagram.

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Introduction

In this research the similarities and differences between types of city brand engagement of Dubai and Paris by Instagram users are investigated. Through this research the effective methods and techniques of city brand engagement, with regards to social media, are identified. With typologies deduced from academic references, each Instagram engagement was analyzed and categorized. By using the application program interfaces (API's) of both cities, the scalability is measured and the consumer engagement of the cities are realized. The official Instagram accounts of the cities are also explored, acquiring information from the brands' side and how they engage their consumers. Us, a team of young proffesionals, will apply our understanding and expertise in order to draw conclusions and recommendations from the found results.

Theoretical Framework

The study of Brodie, et al. (2013) applies a netnographic methodology, which is qualitative research based on an ethnographic methodology, but then applied to communities that are located online. It analyses unique phases of engagement which are main and sub processes (learning, sharing, advocating, socializing and co-developing) relating to online brand communities. In addition, the levels of engagement are determined by emotional, behavioral and cognitive variables, in which there exists a positive relationship between emotional engagement and behavioral/cognitive engagement. This model is applied in researching

Coursaris, et al. (2013) researched strategic consumer engagement with regards to classifying brand facebook page messages. What was noticeable in this study was that both the researcher and the users were considered. Furthermore they make a connection between the different dimensions in SM, the messages and the genres they belong too. Coursaris, et al. (2013) applied a framework in which different types of engagement were described, for this research this typology was applied in segmenting the enagement on the online platform InstaGram. The variables that were extracted from this research study and applied for this research were:

Promotions, heritage, awareness, openings, community, appreciation, holiday and event.

In the article Digital Junk, Freeman, et al. (2014) apply another model concerning tyology which is utilized for this research as well. The variables that were extracted from this study and were applied as typology for this research were:

User-generated-content (USG), celebrities and sponsorship or partnership.

The academic references on which the typologies in this study are based on, come from Brodie, et al., Cursaris et al., & Freeman et al. All conribute to the list of typologies used as they are deducted from their individual studies.

Methodology

The methodology for this research allows for both the consumer side and brand side to be investigated regarding Paris and Dubai.

Secondary data provided through the API dataset allows access to hashtag behavior by Instagram users who engage Paris and/ or Dubai in their posts. The generated data contains data in the timeframe of 30-31 May 2016 and represents the consumers' interaction with both Paris and Dubai. A sample was conducted from this data, covering the 100 top liked posts and the 20 least liked posts per city, making it a total of 200 top posts and 40 least liked posts. This way the differences and similarities between high engagement posts and low engagement post can be compared.

In addition, data was selected from the media platform Instagram itself. In doing so two accounts were selected for both cities, in which one account represents the tourist office and the other represents the city office. This way the brands' digital engagement with its consumers can be analyzed, and the image they want to project and market to the world about their city.

The accounts for Paris were:

- @paris_maville (City Office)
- @parisjetaime (Official Tourist Office)

The accounts for Dubai were:

- @dubai (City Office)
- @visitdubai (Official Tourist Office)

For all four accounts the most recent 50 posts were studied and analyzed. The Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are based on the available metrics of the total number of customer interactions, that were used to calculate the engagement rate are:

- number of likes
- number of comments
- media type
- most popular key words in comments and titles (tag cloud)
- engagement typology

Subsequently, the engagement rate for each post was calculated to gain quantitative insight into this research.

The formula used to calculate the engagement rate per post in each brand (Paris and Dubai) was:

Engagement rate = (likes + comments) / followers / number of posts x100%

So far the above research has established two perspectives to be examined, how do brands engage with consumers and how consumers engage with brands. In total 100 posts were extracted per city (2 IG accounts per city) which is why 200 posts were taken from the API data to create consistency within the data of the research.

Next, each post was categorized on its typology by the researchers on the basis of the typology sheet by the before mentioned authors. In order to ensure intercoder realiability each post was categorized by two researchers, who must agree on the chosen typology for each post. As the Instagram platform allows for regrams to be posted, this was also the case in the posts by all 4 Instagram accounts. These fall under the typology of User Generated Content (CGC). In order to differentiate these posts from each other to get more concrete and detailed results, subcategories were made based on the most common trends in all posts.

The UCG consists of:

- Skyline/ Building
- Sports
- Art/ Culture
- Landscape
- Event
- Food

Comparing the amount of comments and like in different accounts we also realised how much the quality of those comments varies from group to group and that none of the tools we used in our study gave us a proper picture of the quality of engagement. That lead us to overall analysis of brands' goals and strategy and the quality results of feedback loops they lead to.

Following this, the quality of the users' comments to posts to the quantity of posts were compared to see how users react to different ways of brand engagement strategies. In order to do so we took a look at mentioned accounts' tactics and learned that different accounts of the same brand have different goals on Instagram. To support this hypothesis we took 1 post of each account in order to analyze the way consumers engage with different types of brands' behavior. As a standard of "quality comment" (QC) a comment with more than 1 word not including tags and emoticons was set as a benchmark to all other comments. As "spam" users we understand accounts with promotional marketing value or with content that is irrelevant to the topics and ideas of the brand, therefore, does not correspond with the brand's target audience. Finally, the generated Instagram dataset and the API hashtag dataset was compared.

Research Limitations

There are certain limitations present when comparing both datasets (API and official Instagram pages):

- Both data sets belong to different time periods. The API data that was extracted covers exlusively the 30th and 31st of May. Whereas, the analysed data from the IG accounts covers the 50 most recent posts. Hence, this restricts comparing the data to a full extent. However, analysing data that cover a wider time span gives more internal insight regarding the engagement because the API data is basically a snapshot.
- Due to lack of time not all posts could be analyzed and so the latest 50 post were extracted for analysis, also interfering with the random sampling method.
- The 100 most liked posts from the API data were selected to examine the posts that were most engaged with, and the 20 least liked posts were selected to create a balance, however this balance is not equal and still limits the random sampling method.
- While analyzing the quality of comments in each group, the most commented post for every group was chosen due to lack of time.
- Posts that were previously accesible, are now not available anymore, bringing inconsistency to the number of posts per city we were able to analyze. In total this was 12.1% for Paris and 8% for Dubai.
- Because a city is not a concrete product which you can buy, and it is a continuous changing environement, the findings do not necessarilly have to be applicable in a different time frame. For example, within Paris many posts were related to the Euro Cup.

Research Results

Paris

@Parisjetaime

@Parisjetaime (167k followers, 1503 posts) - official tourist office acount in Instagram

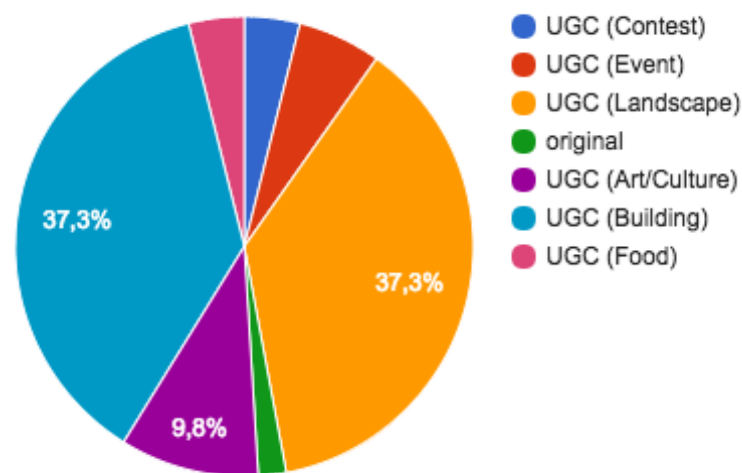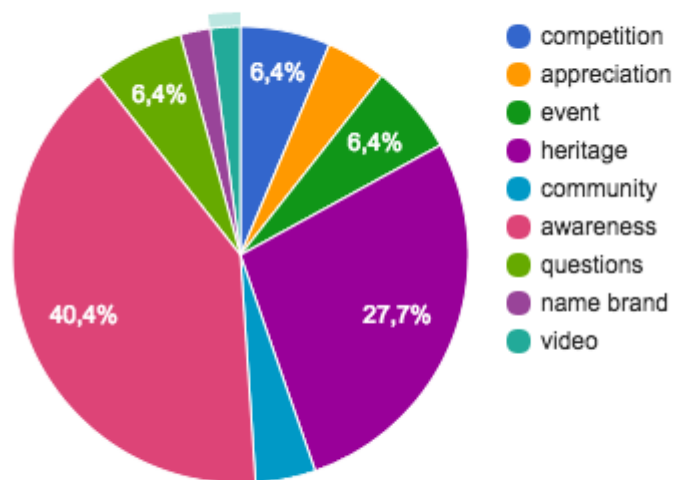|	
Total number of likes from recent 50 posts:	366.566
Total number of comments from recent 50 posts:	3.248
Media type:	98% photo, 2% video
Engagement rate per post	4.43%

98% of the content is a repost of user photos with original title of the grop. Pictures are of the very good quality and engaging.

@Parisjetaime - Typology by source of content

- UGC (Contest)
- UGC (Event)
- UGC (Landscape)
- original
- UGC (Art/Culture)
- UGC (Building)
- UGC (Food)

37,3% — 37,3% — 9,8%

Posts in the group are mainly engaging with pictures of Paris highlights, street views and famous landmarks.

@Parisjetaime Typology

Legend:
- competition
- appreciation
- event
- heritage
- community
- awareness
- questions
- name brand
- video

6,4% · 6,4% · 6,4% · 40,4% · 27,7%

@Paris_maville

@Paris_maville (135k followers, 608 posts)

To examine the engagement of the @paris_maville account, 50 posts were extracted as a sample, these were the 50 most recent posted posts.
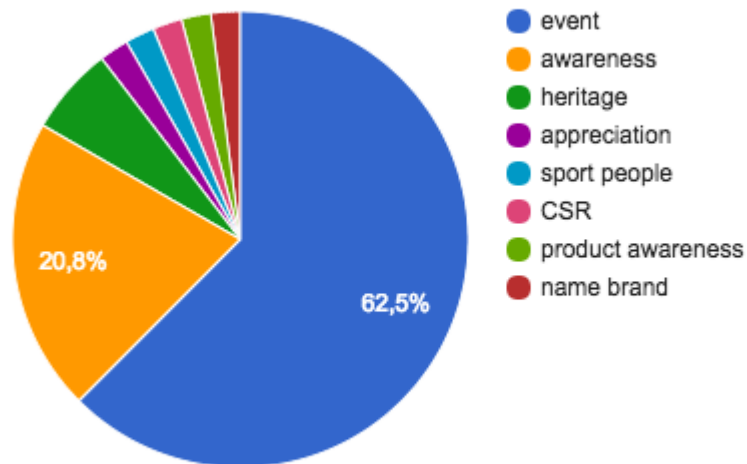
Analysis of sample of 50 posts

Total number of likes from 50 posts (sample):   106 690

Total number of comments from 50 posts (sample):   792

Mediatype: 100% photos

Engagement rate: 79,62%

Engagement rate per post (sample):   1,59%

@Paris Maville - Typology based on source of content

- original
- UGC (event)
- UGC (landscape)

14%

84%
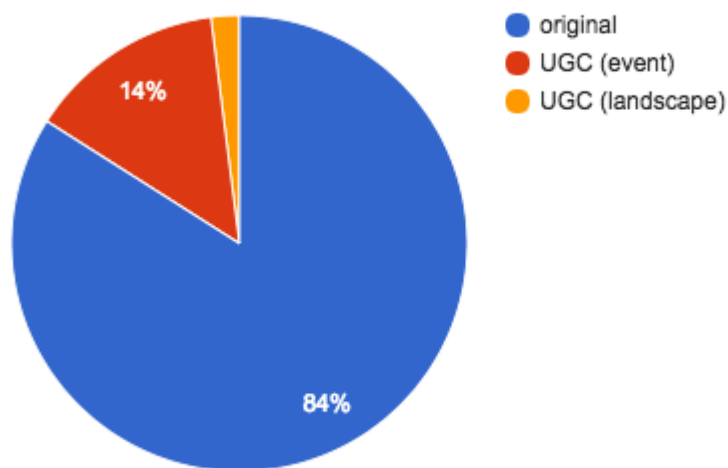
The graph depicts that 16% of the content posted on @Paris Maville are oringal User Generated Content, the remaining 84% are original images.

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@Paris Maville Typology

- event
- awareness
- heritage
- appreciation
- sport people
- CSR
- product awareness
- name brand

The majority of the posts on this account were related to events (62,5%). Furthermore, awareness was the second typology that occured often (20,8%).

Since the IG accounts represent how brands engage with users it can be stated that the most popular engagement is related to events and creating awareness through original . On the other side, within the comments of those users reflects how users engage with the brands. It appears that this was many times not necesarilly directly related to the brand however it was indirectly as users notify there friends and comment on the posts.

**TagCloud: Overview of word frequency for @Paris Mavile & @Parisjetaime**

To examine whether words exist that are significant within the comments of the sample, all comments of both accounts (100 posts) belonging to Paris were merged and gathered. The tagcloud seen above depicts which words were used most often and which appeard less frequent. The most frequent word used in both accounts was "Paris", "France" and "belle". Furthermore, some emoticons were also extremely popular in the posts, especially the smiley with heart eyes. This also shows the change in online communication as the use of emoticons is increasing and the use of words is decreasing.

#Paris API

Analysis of sample of 100 posts

Total number of likes from 100 posts:	366.648
Total number of comments from 100 posts:	3.866
Mediatype:	4% video 96% photo
Engagement rate:	79,62%
Engagement rate per post (sample):	1,59%

Majority of the posts with hashtag #Paris were not related to the city itself and were used for the posts with reselling, selfpromotion or other good promotion or simply #paris to increase the scope of users.

#Paris API Typology
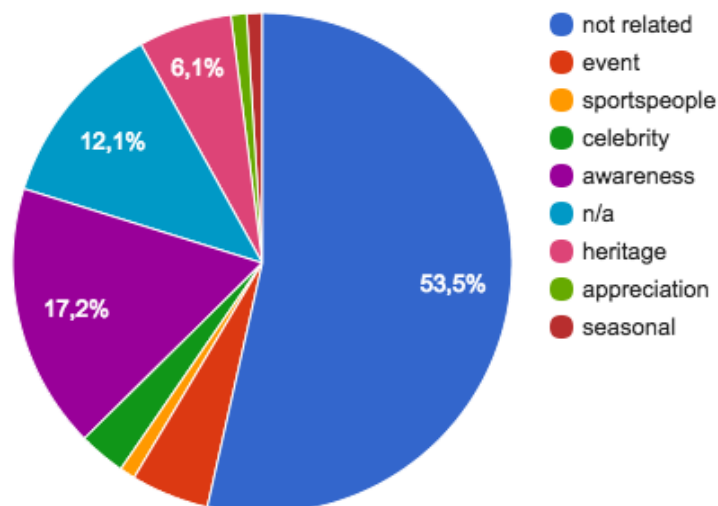
Dubai

The Research Team created a sample of the 50 latests posts of @Dubai and @Visit.Dubai. Additionaly, the RT looked at 100 most liked posts and the 20 least liked posts of the #Dubai API data.

@Dubai

The official account of Dubai is @Dubai. @Dubai has 1.4 million followers and has published 1202 posts.

|	
Total number of likes from the sample:	16 670 600
Total number of comments from the sample:	16 460
Mediatype	86% photo / 14% video
Engagement rate per post:	23,84%

First, the research team looked at the source of the content. The content of @Dubai consists of only 14% of original

@Dubai Typology based on source of content

- UGC (Skyline/Buildings)
- UGC (Landscape
- UGC (Sports)
- Not UGC

14% / 14% / 70%
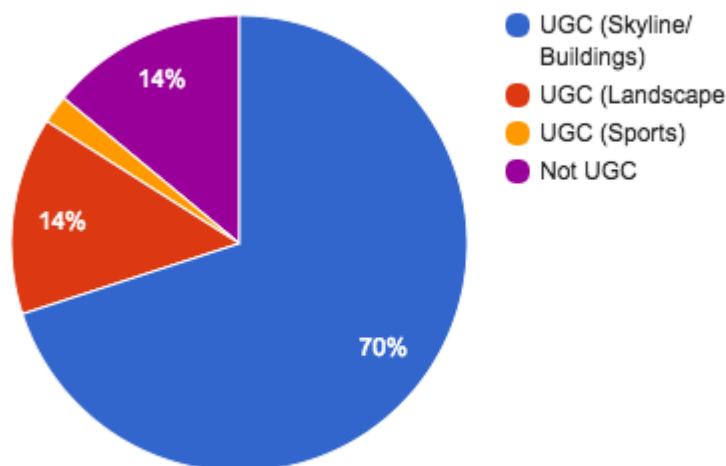
images, all the other images are reposted from users. The most popular category of UGC was Skyline/Commercial Buildings (70%), followed by Landscape and Sports (both 14%)Secondly, the RT categorized the posts into different typologies. The most popular category is 'Awareness' with 82,4%, followed by 'Event' with 9,8%.
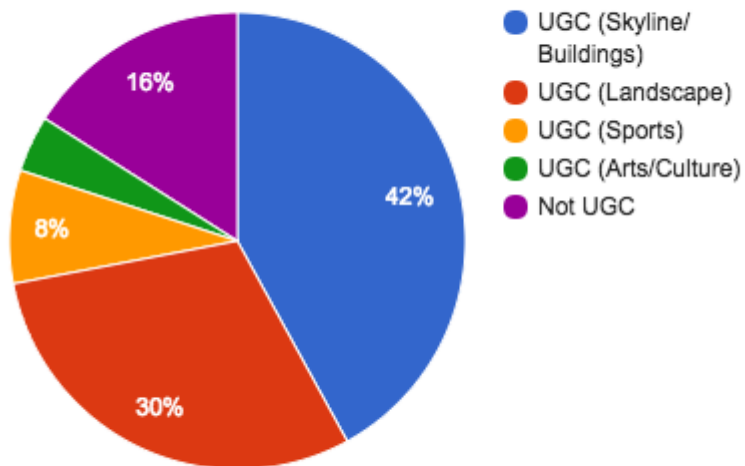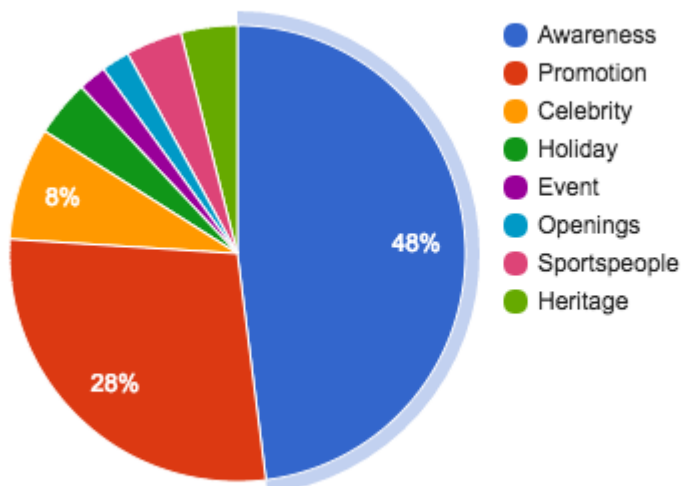
@Dubai Typology
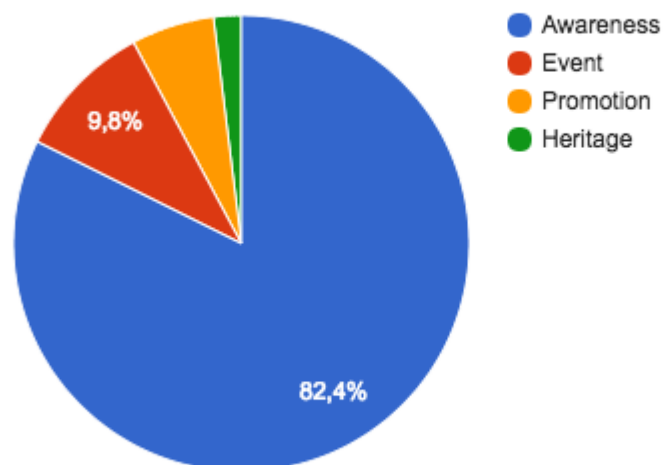
@Visit.Dubai

The official tourism departement account is @Visit.Dubai. @Visit.Dubai has 353.000 followers and has published 771 posts.

Total number of likes from the sample:	247 581
Total number of comments from the sample:	1 929
Engagement rate per post:	1,41%
Mediatype	90% photo / 10% video

When looking at the source of the content of @Visit.Dubai, the have 16% of original posts and 84% of user generated content. The most popular category of UGC is Skyline/Commercial buildings (42%), followed by Landscape (30%) and Sports (8%).

@Visit.Dubai Typology based on source of content

When looking at the second typology of the account, it becomes clear that Awareness (48%) and Promotion (28%) are the most common.

@Visit.Dubai Typology

#Dubai API

Next, the RT looked at the hashtag Dubai. A majority of the posts (55%) was categorized as not related. The most reoccuring category is Awareness (8%), Promotion (7%) and Indirect Branding (7%).

@Dubai & @Visit.Dubai

TagCloud: Overview of word frequency for @Dubai & @Visit.Dubai

Furthermore, the comments of the @Visit.Dubai and @Dubai accounts are analysed by looking at how frequent words are mentioned.. The words most commonly used are Dubai, beautiful, love, visit, place and amazing.

Least Popular Posts with #Paris and #Dubai

We analyzed the least popular posts with #Dubai and #Paris from the API data by looking at 20 posts for each destination with the least amount of likes (0 or 1 like).

The content of the **#Paris** posts with zero or one like were:

- Fashion (fashion looks)
- Football
- Art pieces
- Advertizing of businesses (artificial hair and business cards)

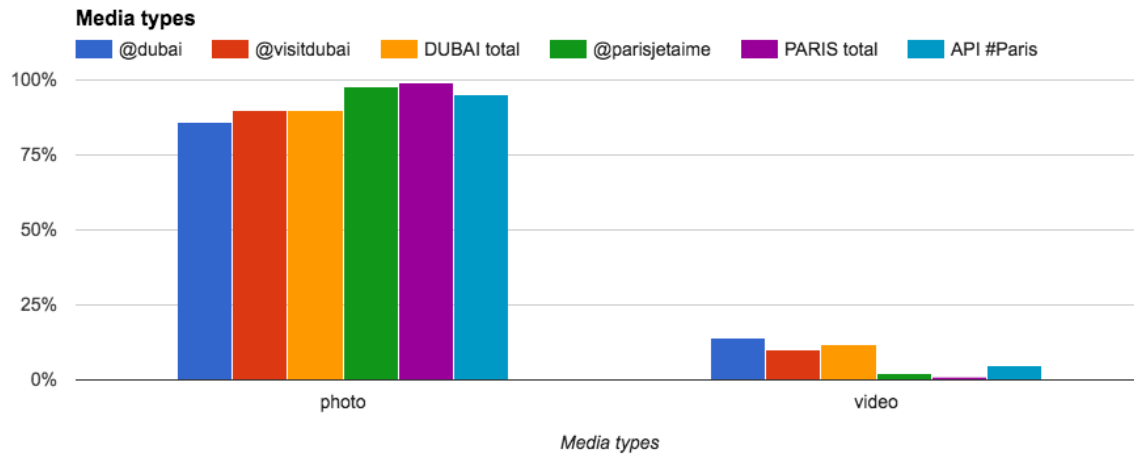The photos are of bad quality and not directly related to the city.

The content of the **#Dubai** posts with zero or one like were:

- fashion (resellers of brands)
- family pictures

These photos are also of bad quality and not directly related to the city.

Discussion

Media types of posts

Both, consumers and brands use mainly photos and the share of video is very small. Dubai is using more video than Paris. A good video is more engaging than a good photo, which becomes clear in the Dubai accounts, where the videos were the most liked posts.

Engagement rate of IG

The Research Team calculated the engagement rates of all 4 brands present on Instagram. When looking at the quantitave rate of engagement of @Dubai it is quite impressive. @Visitdubai and @Paris_maville show rather moderate engagement in terms of customer interaction. @Paris_maville is communicated in French and that limits the engagement by the language barrier. But we also need to look at the quality side of the engagement (comment evaluation).
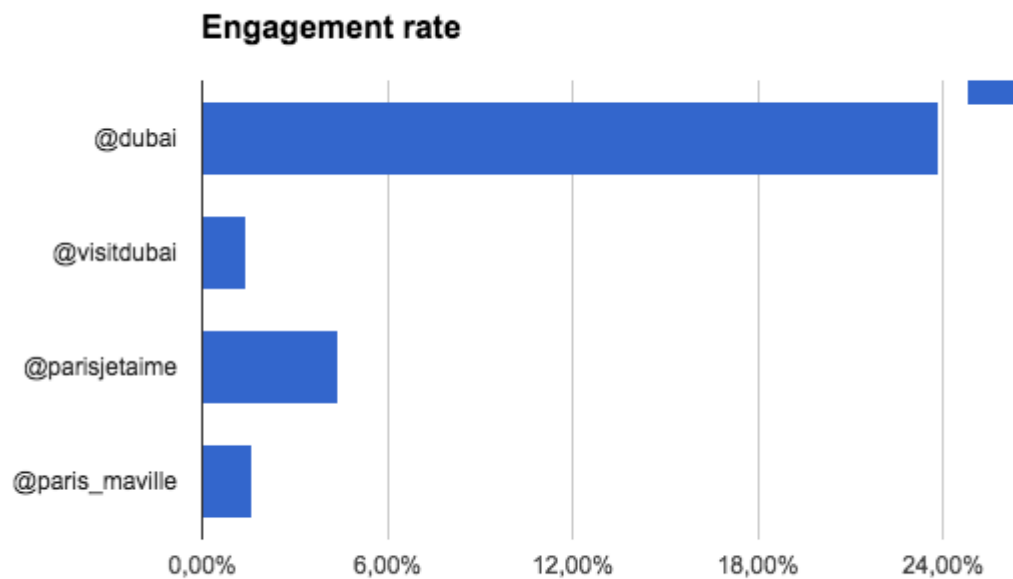
Engagement rate

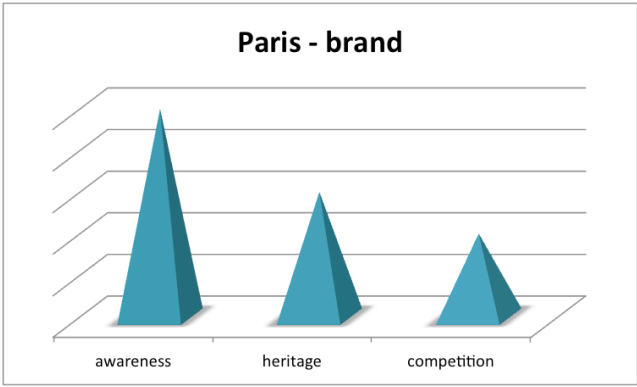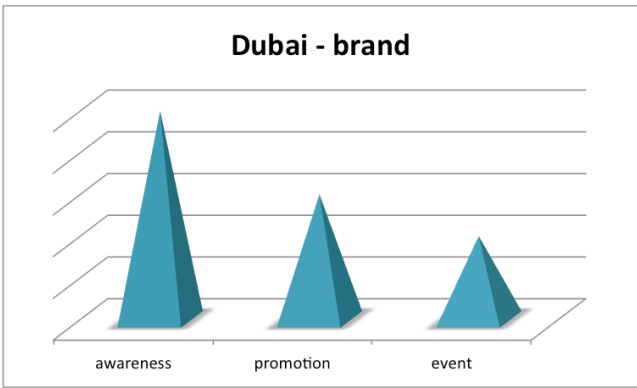**Comparing the Quantity and Quality of Engagement for Different Accounts**

Witihin the brand @Dubai shows a low interest in the quality of engagement as the brand rarely writes long posts nor takes part in the dialogue with consumers. This IG account also doesn't initiate any kind of open communication via contests or even questions. On the other hand, @Visit.Dubai promotes UGC by posting pictures made by subscribers, participates in the dialogue by responding to the users in the comment section, and marks the places where photos were taken in order to inform users about different travel ideas in the city. Therefore, the amount of quality comments (QC) is 14% higher, the amount of influencers is 8% higher and the amount of spam accounts is 5% lower when comparing the two Dubai IG accounts.

In the organizational IG account of Paris, @Paris_maville, we can clearly see the TA being the local community, as all the posts are written in French and the content is supporting the national spirit and ideas. The tourist IG account, @Parisjetaime, shows more touristic content as it is mostly written in English and promotes more general values in the way that is more commonly percieved by travellers. Also, this account has different contests and other ways of engagement that encourage users to travel to Paris.

Paris vs Dubai In general, the quality of posts are higher for the selected Paris groups. 44% for @Parisjetaime and 48% for @Paris_maville versus 33% for @Visit.Dubai and 19% for @Dubai. At the same time the amount of influencers is higher for the Dubai group of accounts - 32% in total versus 12% for Paris. However, the high quantity of comments for the Dubai accounts lead to a higher number of spam accounts among the users being engaged.

Most popular types of engagement

While analyzing typology of engagement for brands, we could highlight 3 most frequent types for each city. Apparently, posts that build company presence and attentivness to brand are on the top displaying category "awareness".

Paris - brand (bar chart: awareness, heritage, competition)	Paris relies a lot on city landmarks (Eiffel Tower, Louvre, Sacre Coer a.o.) and heritage sites in communication, creating positive emotions about the city with nice images sourced by the users (User generated content). Paris builds connections to consumer through interaction in competitions as well: "win overnight in Paris for 2" etc..
Dubai - brand (bar chart: awareness, promotion, event)	Dubai engages with their users through uploading pictures mostly of the skyline and landscapes. Especially buildings likes Madinat Jumeriah and Burj Khalifa are featured and promoted a lot. Both accounts use mostly user generated content.

Customers engage with the brands through the hashtag and often use it without real connection to the city. Hashtag seems to be a mean to get attention to the post even though it is not related to the city but to selfpromotion, reselling of brands or promoting other businesses. There is a big share of missing - n/a (not available). Most probably the users changed their status to private or deleted the post.

Paris - customers

not related   awareness   n/a
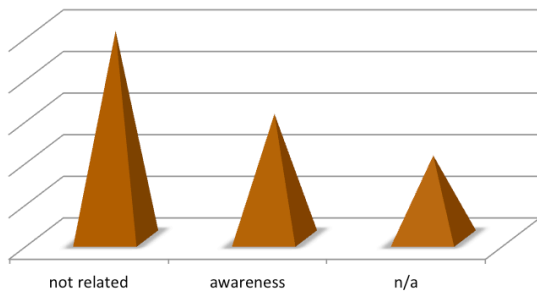
Brand awareness is on the second position for customer engagement with the city. This type of messaging shows a quality of the engagement from the customer side. Celebrities and visitors are sharing with the world that they are visitng Paris and enjoying it.

Dubai - customers

not related   n/a   indirect branding
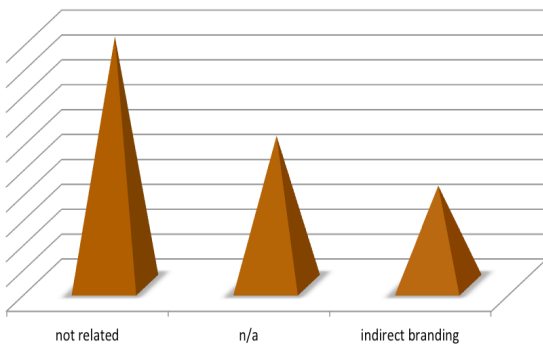
Similarly to Paris, the majority of the post published together with the hasthtag Dubai are not related to Dubai. Also, a lot of the posts are indirect branding Dubai. Images like watches and cars of expensive brands confirm the image of Dubai as a rich city perfect for shopping of luxurious brands.

Conclusion

For both the Paris and Dubai accounts there was a lot of interaction with pictures that enframe symbols representing the city, specifically architecture, for example, the Burj al Khalifa and the Eiffel Tower. In the case of Paris this includes traditional and classical architecture, whereas Dubai is a "new" city and buildings are very modern. Nevertheless, for both cities architecture was a major factor for users to engage, this was applicable for both UGC and original images. For the Paris accounts this falls within the category heritage, for Dubai this was the category skyline/buildings.

For the Paris and Dubai accounts, the most used typology was awareness. The accounts communicate with the users by sharing images that increase the awareness. On the other hand, the API data shows that users like to engage with the cities by posting image related to awareness. For both of the data sets of the hashtags, the awareness typology was the most popular (besides not related content), indicating that awareness is an effective way of engaging the users.

All four accounts repost user generated content. Both Dubai accounts have a relatively similar share of UGC (84% and 86%), however between the Paris accounts the difference is bigger (2% and 84%). The engagement rate of @Parisjetaime, the account with 84% UGC, is significantly higher than the @Paris_maville account, which could indicate that consumers like to engage with brands that share UGC.

In all accounts there were significantly more pictures than videos. However, the engagement regarding videos was much higher as they received more likes. This is apllicable for all Dubai videos and for all Paris videos that were related to the account.

The consumers engage with the brand Dubai through indirect branding using the hashtag Dubai. Mainly expensive watches and sportscar are popular in the API data of Dubai, which enforces the luxurious image of Dubai as a shopping city. Noticeably, the two instagram account of Dubai have no posts who have a direct or obvious link to the luxurious shopping scene in Dubai. Instead, the focus was mainly on the two most popular building (Burj al Arab and Madinat Jumeirah), the skyline and the landscapes in Dubai.

Through analysing the comments posted on the accounts of Dubai and Paris, it becomes clear that Paris and Dubai get a fair share of comments in their own language (French and Arabic), suggesting that consumers are more likely to engage with the instagram accounts when they speak the language of the destination. Furthermore, the amount of French comments on the Paris accounts was significantly more compared to the Arabic comments on Dubai accounts..

Recommendations

By analyzing the afore-mentioned results the research team came up with the following recommendations:

- Using more video's, e.g. series of short video's as story telling.
- Using hashtags for campaigns instead of general hashtag #dubai or #paris to follow user generated content
- Using more messaging on product awareness to have more variety on customer engagement: openings, public service announcements a.o.
- Open local chapters for global Instagram groups to improve communication between users and between users and brands in a one language environment
- Dubai should emphasize its image as a luxurious shopping city more on their Instagram accounts.
- Use UGC that is related to awareness

Recommendations for Quantity and Quality of Engagement for Different Accounts @Paris_maville could benefit from targeting more influencers and maybe opening a line of conversations with its users.

@Parisjetaime should also consider engaging influencers and also work on more practical content for users, informing them about locations of the spots and different events/ sights, as this is more likely to provoke a dialogue with users.

Both accounts should take into consideration a possibility of replying to some comments in order to show users they are heard and their input is appreciated.

@Dubai could change the focus from just beautiful photo's and video's, to creating the main message and uniform communication with users behind the posts in order to increase the quality of engagement.

@Visit.Dubai could benefit from adding more cultural posts or information unkown to some tourists regarding interesting and unique city spots in order to make the account more valuable and considered of tourists who might not be that familiar with the country and traditions behind it.

For both accounts it is strongly recommended to clean the spam accounts from subscribers and switching the focus from quantity to quality of the engagement.

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