

From Desire to Loyalty: Building Destination Loyalty through the Example of Sárvár

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Abstract: Tourism marketing's key component is enhancing the competitiveness of destinations, which can be achieved through effective communication tools. As consumer decisions in the tourism industry are often based on emotional factors, building a destination's image and developing an appropriate marketing strategy are crucial. Sárvár, as a prominent health tourism destination, heavily relies on experience-based marketing, highlighting the therapeutic effects of thermal water and the available relaxation opportunities. What factors contribute to Sárvár's tourism success? What strategies and methods can be applied to turn potential visitors into returning tourists? What opportunities do online marketing tools and mobile applications offer in tourism, and how do they influence consumer behavior? In this publication, I answer these questions by examining Sárvár's marketing communication tools through the AISDALSLove model, which is a more recent version of the widely known AIDA model. The AISDALSLove model is a marketing communication framework that analyzes consumer behavior and decision-making processes in seven steps. These steps are closely interconnected and aim to gradually build consumer commitment and loyalty. I hope that my analysis will contribute to Sárvár's future marketing communication activities and serve as a good example for other cities.

1 Introduction

Transforming products into brands through marketing activities has become a common practice. This process involves enhancing products with unique characteristics that distinguish them from competitors, making them easily recognizable, allowing for innovative advertising appearances, and ultimately generating additional profit for their owners.

In recent years, competition has intensified to such an extent in fields like tourism, investment promotion, and many others that municipalities and cities have increasingly adopted branding strategies. But what exactly does this activity entail?

Cities do not merely focus on selecting logos and slogans; they consciously build their identity and image. Their goal is to create a more attractive perception of

themselves, positioning them more favourably against nearby or even distant competitors. This branding activity targets multiple audience segments:

1. **Residents:** The inhabitants of a city can actively participate in shaping its image, identity, and reputation, thereby fostering community pride.
2. **Tourists:** Strengthening tourism not only boosts the local hospitality and service industries but also enhances commercial activities.
3. **Investors:** Attracting both local and external investors can lead to infrastructure development, job creation, and the long-term growth of the settlement.

As a result, city branding becomes a complex and strategic tool that contributes to economic, social, and cultural benefits. [1]

2 The Specificities of Tourism Marketing in the Tourism Sector

Since both the AIDA and AISDALSLove models primarily focus on traditionally defined products, it is essential to clarify the specific characteristics of tourism products. Tourism products or services exhibit distinct attributes from multiple perspectives.

Tourism marketing can be defined as a specialized branch of service marketing. [2] Understanding its characteristics stems from the unique aspects of service marketing. According to Veres (2021)[3], the key characteristics of tourism marketing are:

- It involves movement, as well as staying and engaging in activities at the destination.
- The travel destination and stay differ from the permanent place of residence.
- Both the movement and stay are temporary.
- The purpose of travel is predetermined.
- The service provider plays a crucial role.
- Seasonality is a significant factor.
- It consists of interconnected processes.
- Intermediaries play a key role in the sales process.
- The service consumption process is associated with high perceived risk.
- The substitutability of services is high.
- Marketing communication is of paramount importance.

Due to the nature of tourism marketing, marketing communication plays an especially significant role. When analysing its importance, it is crucial to consider

the transformation of travel habits, demographic shifts within the traveling audience (particularly the growing proportion of young, Generation Z tourists), and the factors influencing travel decisions and pre-planning phases.

Traditional marketing communication tools are increasingly ineffective—or entirely inadequate—for reaching young people (Generation Z) and those under 35. This demographic's media consumption habits are drastically different from older generations, making them accessible almost exclusively through digital channels. [4]

Over the past years, or even the last decade, one of the biggest challenges in corporate marketing communication planning has been the dramatic decline in the effectiveness of traditional communication tools such as television, radio, outdoor advertisements, and print media. Concurrently, online solutions, such as blogs, social media platforms, Google Ads, YouTube advertisements, and mobile applications, have gained prominence. [5]

The adoption of these new tools requires a new marketing approach, emphasizing the precise identification of target groups. This is essential for accurately understanding and characterizing consumer behavior. [6]

The emergence and growing influence of new communication tools also significantly impact tourism marketing. When planning offline and online marketing strategies, the following tourism-specific characteristics must be considered:

- The unique attributes of the "tourism product."
- The evolving media consumption habits of tourism consumers, both domestic and international.
- Changes in the age structure of target groups.
- The increasing role and significance of digitalization in communication.

David Ogilvy (1985) dedicated an entire chapter of his book to the topic of international travel. However, since the digital revolution, organizing and conducting travel has become significantly more streamlined. As a result, the goal of tourism marketing is to introduce services as early as possible in the planning phase, ensuring that the promotional messages closely align with the real-life experiences awaiting travellers. [7]

3 The Process of Travel Decision-Making

To accurately determine which marketing communication tools are most effective at different stages of the travel decision-making process, it is essential to understand the steps involved in this process. These steps are also outlined in the National Tourism Development Strategy 2030 – Tourism 2.0.[8]

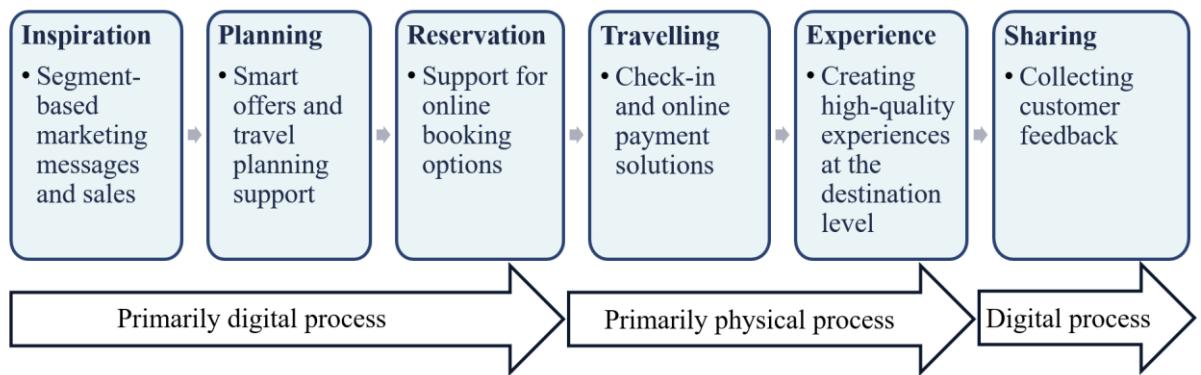


Figure 5
The process of travel decision-making[8]

At the initial stage of the travel process, it is crucial to capture the attention of relevant travel segments. This requires the creation of engaging and high-quality digital content and ensuring its continuous availability.[8]

The second key task is facilitating travel planning, which involves providing personalized recommendations and user-friendly tools tailored to individual preferences. [8]

For successful sales, it is essential to ensure a smooth and seamless booking process. [8]

To transform traditional travel processes and enhance their efficiency, the integration of physical service providers and digital technologies is a primary objective. [8]

Creating and maintaining a high-quality customer experience at both the destination and service levels is fundamental. [8]

The final stage of the travel process focuses on encouraging experience sharing, as well as collecting and analyzing customer feedback. [8]

The process flowchart clearly demonstrates that, nowadays, tourists not only engage in personal travel experiences but also predominantly organize their trips in the digital space. Therefore, in my study, I focus on analysing online marketing communication elements.

4 Online Platforms

4.1 Paid Online Advertisements

Today, a vast selection of online marketing tools is available. Alongside and in place of traditional banner ads, rich media solutions are gaining prominence, offering a more interactive and visually engaging experience. These can be seen as modern versions of traditional magazine advertisements, where embedded creative elements—either smaller placements within articles or larger front-page visuals—are designed to capture attention, encourage engagement, and effectively reach the target audience through the given medium. [9]

Social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Instagram, play a crucial role in precisely targeting audiences. Geotargeting technology used in Facebook campaigns allows ads to appear in the local language of the target country, making them more effective in reaching the desired audience. In addition to social media campaigns, paid pre-roll ads, such as those appearing before YouTube videos, are becoming increasingly popular. On the world's largest video-sharing platform, promotional videos and nation-branding films often appear before videos with millions or even billions of views, serving as powerful tools for tourism and national marketing communication. [9]

4.2 Website

Websites serve as compasses for marketing communication, acting as landing pages for campaigns while also helping measure visitor traffic and demographics. They are the primary online touchpoints where potential visitors and service providers connect. [9]

Developing a well-designed and effectively executed website is thus of strategic importance. Consistent and cohesive messaging on the site not only encourages visitors to travel but also provides essential on-site information that enhances their experiences and strengthens their satisfaction with the destination. [9]

4.3 Social Media Pages

Beyond websites, managing official social media profiles is equally crucial. [10]

Social media platforms like Facebook no longer only target younger generations—older age groups are also actively engaged on these platforms daily. [9]

A Facebook page serves multiple functions:

1. Information hub: it provides essential details about the destination, helping visitors access key information.
2. Navigation tool: it offers useful links and subpages, aiding users in finding relevant resources.
3. Engagement and entertainment: it shares entertaining content to maintain audience interest and boost social media presence effectiveness. [9]

5 From the AIDA Model to the AISDALSLove Model

When defining marketing objectives, a company seeks to increase either spontaneous or aided brand awareness or the rate of repeat purchases, depending on the type of campaign being executed (branding or direct response). To understand how communication campaigns function, it is crucial to examine the psychological mechanisms through which advertising influences its audience. In other words, how the marketing mix is mentally represented in the consumer's mind.

Marketing communication professionals must be aware of how their advertisement will affect the identified and targeted market segment. The marketing objective system must effectively guide the target audience to a higher level of purchase readiness. [11]

The hierarchy-of-effects models have attempted to map consumer responses throughout different historical consumer eras. These theories assume that advertising processes are perceived by consumers as a series of emotional and cognitive transformations.

In 1898, businessman E. S. Elmo Lewis formulated the fundamental principles of advertising:

"Attract attention, maintain interest, create desire, and drive action." [12]

From the initials of these principles, the AIDA model was born—one of the most widely recognized impact models in advertising to this day. The fundamental premise of AIDA is that the primary goal of advertising is to evoke a desire for ownership, leading to the purchase of a product or service.

When generating desire is challenging, the goal can be achieved by first stimulating interest. If spontaneous interest is not naturally present, the first task is to capture attention. According to the model, eliciting attention is the minimum requirement—an advertisement that fails to do so cannot be successful.

However, the AIDA model is based on two assumptions that limit its broad applicability:

1. Consumer passivity: the model assumes that consumers passively receive information.
2. Linear information processing: it presumes that consumers always progress through the stages in the same order:
 - o Attention → Interest → Desire → Action
 - o Regardless of prior knowledge, emotions, or previous experiences. [13]

While desire-driven advertising remains effective today, marketers have recognized that AIDA is not universally applicable and is only effective for certain product categories (e.g., sensory-driven consumer goods). Despite its limitations, AIDA remains a foundational model, as all subsequent hierarchy-of-effects models have either evolved from it or been defined in contrast to it.

To better understand how communication campaigns function, we must analyse how contemporary impact hierarchy models have been structured, building upon the AIDA model.

To do this, we must identify three key consumer response variables in advertising campaigns:

1. Cognitive Dimension (Thinking) – The consumer's perception of the informative content of an advertisement.
 - o Common metrics: recall, recognition, comprehension.
2. Affective Dimension (Feeling) – The consumer's emotional response to an advertisement.
 - o Common metrics: likability, attitudes, emotional engagement.
3. Conative Dimension (Experience-Based Behavior) – Factors influencing future purchasing behavior, based on past product experiences (memories, subconscious or conscious details from previous interactions).
 - o These variables capture the mental and psychological processes occurring in consumers (process variables). [5]

One of the biggest shortcomings of earlier models was their failure to consider the post-purchase effect—that is, how a purchase influences future decision-making and brand relationships.

A positive purchasing experience can lead to long-term brand loyalty, encouraging repeat purchases and fostering positive brand perceptions. [14]

Recognizing this, Sheldon (1911) introduced the AIDAS model, which added a "Satisfaction" stage after Action, highlighting the importance of post-purchase experience.

Later, Rogers (1983) proposed the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which introduced stages such as:

- Knowledge → Persuasion → Decision (Acceptance/Rejection) → Implementation → Confirmation (continued acceptance, discontinuation, or rejection).

Building on these ideas, Bovee et al. (1995) further developed the concept, suggesting that advertising and other marketing communication tools should reinforce customer satisfaction in the post-purchase phase.

While the marketing community enthusiastically embraced hierarchical explanations of advertising effects, concrete evidence proving that traditional marketing measurements (such as brand awareness, brand familiarity, brand preference, and purchase intention) truly reflect how advertising influences purchasing remains inconclusive. [15]

Ultimately, there is no guarantee that every advertising impact results in a purchase.

The evolution of advertising's broader communicative role and brand development strategies has led researchers to expand upon the AIDA model. To address its limitations, additional key elements were introduced, such as:

- Search (consumer actively seeking information),
- Like/Dislike (emotional response to the brand),
- Share (social sharing of experiences),
- Love/Hate (strong emotional attachment or rejection).

This led to the development of the AISDALSLove Model, which represents a more comprehensive and experience-driven approach to consumer decision-making.

6 Methodology – Introduction to the AISDALSLove Model

In the AISDALSLove model, Professor Wijaya further developed the variables of the AIDA model, refining them at different stages and introducing additional elements:

- "S" (Search) – The process of actively seeking information.
- "L" (Like/Dislike) – The consumer's emotional response (preference or aversion).
- "S" (Share) – The act of sharing experiences with others.

- "Love" (Love/Hate) – The development of strong emotional attachment or rejection.

Additionally, the author categorized advertising effects into short-term and long-term impacts, highlighting their distinct influence on consumer behavior. [16]

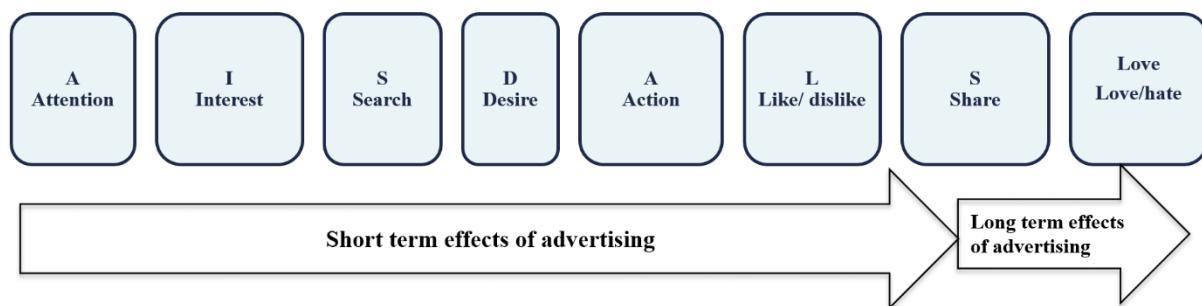


Figure 6
AISDALSLove Model[16]

Based on the above diagram, it can be concluded that the stages from attention to action and like/dislike represent short-term effects, whereas sharing and, especially, love/hate have long-term effects. The newly introduced elements (Search, Like/Dislike, Share, and Love) can be explained as follows. [16]

Search (S)

This element reflects the idea that today's consumers are increasingly critical. They do not immediately accept information obtained from advertisements as credible, nor do they instantly develop a desire to purchase—regardless of how engaging the advertising message is. Instead, consumers seek additional information from other sources before making a purchase decision.[16]

During the search process, consumers explore their environment to find relevant data for making a rational decision. [17]

The search process includes both internal and external searches:

- Internal search involves retrieving stored information, past experiences, and emotions from memory to assess available alternatives.
- Consumers rely on previous knowledge to evaluate options before making a choice.

Like/Dislike (L)

This element is closely linked to post-purchase experiences, particularly when a purchase was influenced by advertising. If consumers like the product, they generally feel satisfied and may take further actions, such as repurchasing or reordering it. Satisfaction can be defined as an attitude-like judgment that develops after a consumption experience. [18]

The significance of the like/dislike effect in the post-purchase stage is why Sheldon (1919) added an "S" (Satisfaction) to the AIDA model, leading to the AIDAS model. Later, Rogers referred to this stage as "Confirmation", while Bovee et al. also called it "Reinforcement". This consumer experience can trigger a snowball effect, where the consumer shares their experience with others about the advertised product, further influencing the brand's perception.

Share (S)

In today's world, where information technology has erased traditional boundaries, consumers can take radical actions that significantly impact a brand's reputation. These actions are driven by their positive or negative experiences with a product.

Moreover, the growing number of social media users allows consumers to freely express their opinions and share their experiences with the world. As a result, brands must provide exceptional consumer experiences that motivate users to share their stories. [16]

Love/Hate

A long-term effect of advertising is that consumers may either love or hate the advertised brand or product. A consumer who was initially interested in the product due to an advertising message (whether visual or verbal) and had a positive experience during use will likely share their experience and develop positive emotions toward the brand. This level of brand affection can grow over time, evolving from indifference or dislike into brand obsession and deep loyalty. [16]

Consumers may also develop love for a brand if they feel connected to its creative concept or story. This connection is often built on deep consumer insights and, when reinforced by a positive brand experience, can lead to long-term brand loyalty and even a sense of ownership. There is no better way to establish lasting brand loyalty than by continuously nurturing the brand-consumer relationship, ensuring that the brand remains present and relevant in the consumer's life. [16]

On the other hand, if a negative experience results in dissatisfaction with the advertised product, consumers may spread negative word-of-mouth, shaping a poor public perception of the brand.

Instead of love and loyalty, dissatisfied consumers may feel frustration or even hatred, which can manifest in various ways, including public complaints, social media criticism, and boycott movements.

7 Brief Introduction of Sárvár

Sárvár is located in the eastern part of Vas County, along the Rába River, and is the second-largest settlement in the county after Szombathely, with a population of approximately 15,000 residents. From a hydrographic perspective, the city and its surroundings are well-endowed, as both the Rába River and the Gyöngyös Creek flow through it.

The undisputed main attraction of Sárvár is the Sárvár Spa and Wellness Bath, whose newly expanded complex opened its doors on December 1, 2002, welcoming visitors seeking relaxation and healing. This development laid the foundation for a series of further investments, including:

- the construction of VitalMed Hotel,
- Sárvár's joining the European Royal Spa Towns Association in 2004,
- the opening of the four-star Bassiana Hotel,
- the completion of Park Inn Hotel in 2006,
- the establishment of a new camping site,
- and finally, the launch of the Spirit Hotel Royal Thermal Spa in 2008. [19]

In 2010, the spa underwent another major development worth 3 billion forints. On October 19, 2012, Sárvár officially received the designation of a medicinal resort, celebrating this achievement with a formal ceremony.

As a result of a one-year qualification process, two areas of the city—"Sárvár – Gyógyvarázs" and "Sárvár – Arboretum"—were officially classified as healing destinations. [20]

Sárvár stands out not only for its architectural and natural attractions but also for its diverse events and festivals. The city hosts a variety of cultural programs, including the International Folklore Festival, brass band festivals, the Vármeeting, and the most famous event, the Simon-Judas Fair. These programs provide excellent entertainment not only for locals but also attract a large number of tourists to the city. [19]

Over the past three decades, in addition to the development of the spa and modernization of infrastructure, numerous significant municipal and state investments have taken place, contributing to the city's growing tourism industry. Since the political transition, substantial funding has also been allocated to the modernization of education and healthcare systems, further strengthening the city's development. [20]

The economic growth of Sárvár, its outstanding role in tourism, and its vibrant cultural life have all contributed to making it one of Hungary's most popular spa towns. In terms of guest nights, Sárvár has consistently ranked among the top ten most visited destinations in the country. [20]

8 Analysis of Sárvár’s Marketing Communication Tools Using the AISDALSLove Model

City marketing, when utilizing various tools effectively, can significantly contribute to a city's success, recognition, and reputation. However, achieving long-term, substantial results requires a consciously planned, strategically thought-out, creative, and economically efficient approach that involves multiple stakeholders working together. [21]

According to my opinion Sárvár serves as a great example of a town that effectively applies marketing tools while also incorporating creative ideas. In the following sections of my study, I will present specific examples of how the town ensures that tourists leave satisfied after their stay and even return multiple times in the future.

For my research, I primarily relied on secondary data, which I obtained from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, along with my own data collection efforts. I would like to express my gratitude to Krisztina Holpert, a representative of Sárvár Tourist & TDM Nonprofit Ltd., for her valuable assistance in answering my questions.

8.1 Attention

The primary objective of advertising is to capture the attention of potential customers—in this case, tourists. If this initial phase fails, the advertisement immediately fails, preventing any further progress in the decision-making process. The first stage of the AIDA model is thus crucial—if the message does not grab attention, it will not reach the target audience, and as a result, no purchase (or visit) will occur.

Previous research and professional articles confirm that advertising activities today take place primarily in the digital space. Krisztina Holpert also emphasized this point, stating that Sárvár primarily reaches potential tourists via online platforms, especially social media and its own website. The key reason for this strategy is that online platforms allow a much wider target audience to be reached at a lower advertising cost. However, she highlighted that printed brochures remain popular among visitors, regardless of age, as they provide a tangible source of information about local attractions and current events.

8.2 Interest

If the first step succeeds and the message reaches the target audience, an effective advertisement must then spark interest. At this stage, advertising must encourage potential visitors (tourists) to develop an interest in Sárvár’s attractions. If this fails,

consumers will not proceed further in the decision-making process, and conversion will not occur.

Sárvár uses various campaigns to increase interest in its attractions. These campaigns often include interactive games, where winners are selected from among participants. The prizes are sponsored by TDM partners, such as Sárvár Spa & Wellness Bath, Spirit Hotel, and Park Inn Hotel.

For example "Collect Coins, Gain Experiences!" was an online campaign required visitors to click on as many appearing coins as possible within a given timeframe. The more coins a player collected, the higher they ranked on the leaderboard. As a result, the TDM office registered 7,000 new newsletter subscribers.

Launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, the "Relax Campaign" differed from traditional promotional activities. Instead of focusing on giveaways or increasing newsletter subscriptions, it aimed to provide a sensory relaxation experience. This unique approach aligned with the public's heightened need for stress relief and mental well-being during the lockdown period, offering content and stimuli designed to evoke calmness rather than drive direct sales or engagement metrics.

The TDM recorded sounds from different parts of the city, such as:

- the bubbling waters of the thermal baths,
- birdsong from the arboretum,
- the sauna ambiance at Spirit Hotel,
- the crackling of firewood.

These sounds were compiled into a "close-your-eyes" relaxation campaign, allowing people to enjoy a piece of Sárvár from home during lockdowns.

The campaign received highly positive feedback, including suggestions for enhancements, such as:

- adding a visual counter,
- incorporating breath-in/breath-out guides,
- improving the sensory experience further.

Inspired by this feedback, the "Relax 2.0" campaign was created, which won the Marketing Diamond Award from the Hungarian Marketing Association in 2023.

8.3 Search

In the previous section, I explained how the "Search" phase begins after a successful interest phase—at this point, potential visitors seek additional information to verify whether the advertised claims align with reality.

When planning a trip, a tourist typically looks for more details about:

1. the main attractions (since this is the primary reason for visiting),

2. accommodation options,
3. upcoming events and entertainment programs.

The most effective platforms for this are official websites and social media pages.

Unfortunately, I was unable to access annual traffic data for www.sarvar.hu. Instead, I used www.similarweb.com, a digital market research and web analytics platform, to collect publicly available data for September.

According to data from SimilarWeb for September 2024, the website recorded a total of approximately 8,900 visits, indicating a decline compared to the previous month. The average duration of a visit was 42 seconds, with users viewing approximately 1.5 pages per session, suggesting relatively brief engagement per visit.

In terms of traffic sources, the majority of users arrived via organic search (55.73%), followed by direct access to the site (21.51%). These figures highlight the continued importance of search engine visibility in attracting visitors.

Analysis of device usage revealed that 67.21% of users accessed the website through mobile devices, while 32.79% utilized desktop computers, underscoring a clear dominance of mobile traffic and the growing need for mobile-optimized content and interfaces.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness and reach of social media platforms in Sárvár's tourism marketing strategy, an assessment was conducted of the town's official accounts across major platforms. The follower counts, recorded during the research period, reveal significant differences in audience engagement across channels. Facebook emerged as the dominant platform, with approximately 21,000 followers, indicating its central role in digital outreach. In contrast, Instagram accounted for a more modest 1,472 followers, suggesting limited but potentially visually driven engagement. TikTok, while increasingly popular globally, had only 34 followers at the time of analysis, reflecting its underutilization or relatively recent adoption within Sárvár's official digital communication strategy. These figures clearly indicate that Facebook remains the most important social media platform for Sárvár, followed by its official website as the second most relevant information source.

I have compiled September's website traffic data for Sárvár's main attractions and major hotels using SimilarWeb. The following table presents this data, showing how different establishments perform in attracting online visitors.

Attractions	Visitor datas	Accommodations	Visitor datas
Sárvár Thermal and Wellness Bath	85 090	Spirit Hotel Thermal Spa***** Sárvár	58 903
Ferenc Nádasdy Museum Sárvár	1488	Park Inn by Radisson Sárvár Resort & Spa	16 506
		Ensana Thermal Sárvár	229 239
		Melea The Health Concept	7851

Figure 7

Additional website traffic data for the month of September based on the analysis of similarweb.com

The data in the table show that the highest number of visitors, totalling 85,090, visit the website of the Sárvár Spa and Wellness Bath. This is followed by the website of the Spirit Hotel Thermal Spa***** Sárvár, which records 58,903 visitors. This comparison also confirms that tourists primarily seek information about the attraction itself.

8.4 Desire

The next step in the advertising message process is creating desire. Even if the message reaches the target audience, it fails if it does not align with their needs or if they cannot relate to it. Creating travel desire is primarily achieved through images, videos, and influencer collaborations. I believe that influencers play a key role in tourism, as tourism products cannot be tested or exchanged like regular goods. Therefore, travel decisions are greatly influenced by recommendations from friends, acquaintances, and trusted sources. A popular influencer can effectively promote a destination and influence potential travellers. So far, Sárvár has only occasionally collaborated with influencers. The most recent significant collaboration was in 2019, when stylist and influencer Schreiter Lilla created a video showcasing Sárvár's attractions, which was very well received.

8.5 Action

The final element of the AIDA model is action, which is realized through the actual purchase—that is, when the visitor truly travels to the destination. Digital tools also play a primary role in planning the journey and compiling the travel package.

The website www.sarvar.hu can be described as highly user-friendly, with several modules designed to assist tourists with bookings. The current package offers of accommodations are up to date, and if a traveller wishes to make a reservation, the website immediately redirects them to the official site of the selected accommodation. The same applies to attractions: www.sarvar.hu displays the latest opening hours and ticket prices, and it also provides hyperlinks to the official pages of the attractions.

A particularly creative feature is the Trip Planner module. Every post and subpage on the site can be easily saved according to the user's individual interests. All it takes is a click on the heart icon in the header. Additionally, users can save personal notes and text snippets among their favourites. Highlighted sections of the site can likewise be stored in the personal space by clicking the heart icon. These saved contents can be especially useful later, for instance during the vacation, when visitors want to check the opening hours of a service provider, the schedule of a specific event, or when they wish to read more about an attraction on-site or watch a related video.

Another innovative solution is the GoGreen application, which was added to the Green Destinations Top 100 Stories list in October 2024. GoGreen is an innovative initiative that allows users to receive personalized tips on how to make their trip to Sárvár more environmentally friendly. These tips can also be shared on social media platforms, enabling those who wish to inspire others to travel "greener" to do so with ease. The platform is available in six languages, and certain tips are accompanied by more detailed, blog-style information.

8.6 Like/Dislike

While the AIDA model ends with action—that is, the purchase—the AISDALSLove model adds an additional element: liking or disliking. Since online platforms now allow guests to evaluate their stay by reviewing the destination, attraction, accommodation, and other services after their visit, it becomes particularly important that they leave with positive experiences. A negative review can, over the long term, significantly reduce the number of future bookings. Therefore, even in this final phase, guest satisfaction is of key importance. The primary goal is for visitors to gain enriching, positive experiences during their stay, leave satisfied, and provide a favourable evaluation of the city.

I conducted a brief analysis regarding the number of likes received by posts published on the Sárvár TDM Facebook page. In my analysis, I examined the posts from January 1, 2024, to October 28, 2024, as illustrated in the diagram below.

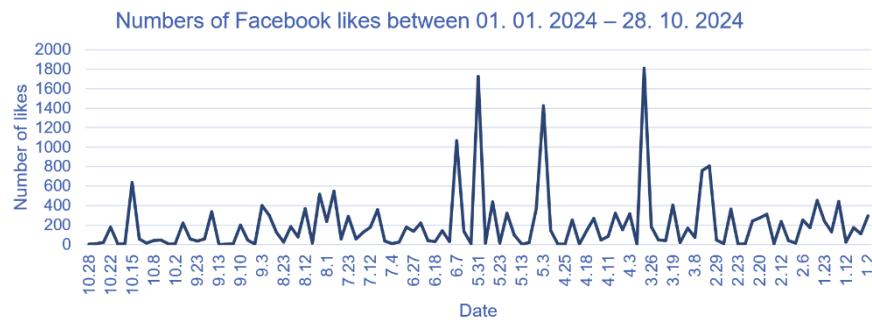


Figure 8
User reactions to Facebook posts

The diagram shows that during the booking period preceding the peak season, the number of positive reactions to individual posts is exceptionally high. These spikes correspond to prize games and promotional campaigns. The TDM office intentionally schedules advertising campaigns during the booking period, as this is when they aim to capture the attention of potential tourists.

Overall, it can be said that paid advertisements receive more likes, although there is no significant difference between the high, shoulder, and off-seasons. This may be due to the fact that health and wellness tourism is less affected by seasonal fluctuations. The comments on the Facebook page are predominantly positive, with only a few users noting overcrowding at the spa or complaining about prices. A small number of comments also suggest that the winners of the prize games should be announced on the Facebook page.

The TDM does not respond to comments on Facebook—neither to positive nor negative feedback. This may be because the page is managed by an external marketing agency, or because the TDM staff are responsible for numerous other tasks in addition to handling public relations. On a positive note, the posts published every 2–3 days are timely and feature consistent visual branding. The content is relevant not only for tourists but also for local residents. In addition, tourists can also rate the city and its attractions on the website szallas.hu.

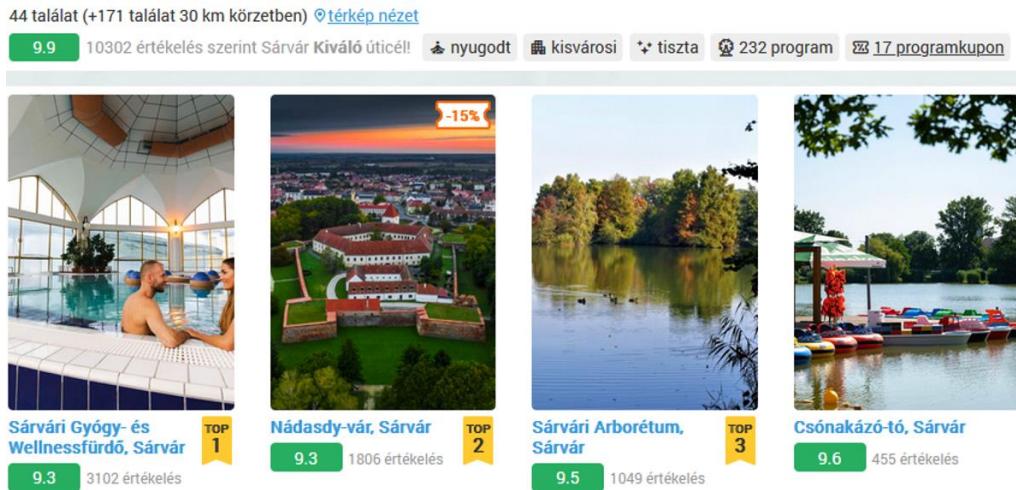


Figure 9
Reviews of Sárvár on www.szallas.hu

The figures show that 10,302 tourists rated the city of Sárvár, and based on their feedback, it received a score of 9.9 out of a possible 10. The city's main strengths, as highlighted by visitors, are that it is peaceful, small-town in character, and clean. Among the attractions, the Sárvár Spa and Wellness Bath ranks first based on 3,102 reviews, earning a score of 9.3. The other landmarks also received ratings above 9 points. All of these data indicate that tourists visiting Sárvár are highly satisfied with the city's attractions and recreational opportunities, and they leave their vacation with pleasant experiences.

8.7 Share (Social Sharing & Recommendations)

Sharing is also an element of the AISDALSLove model, which measures whether visitors share their experiences with others and whether they recommend the city to friends and acquaintances. This element of the model is relatively difficult to measure, as asking tourists whether they would recommend the destination might result in a positive response on a survey, but it remains uncertain whether the recommendation actually takes place later on. In my study, I compared destinations based on how many times the name of the town is mentioned with a hashtag in individual Facebook posts.

City	Total guest traffic (number of guest nights)	Volume of hashtag posts ('000)	Ranking based on hashtags
2. Hévíz	854 380	28	5.
3. Hajdúszoboszló	764 908	18	7.
4. Bükk	631 864	4	9.
5. Zalakaros	607 334	26	6.
6. Sárvár	461 727	15	8.
7. Debrecen	447 928	371	2.
8. Szeged	419 331	399	1.
9. Gyula	404 728	74	4.
10. Győr	372 168	179	3.

Figure 10
Frequency of hashtags (mentions) used in Facebook posts

The table presents the 10 most visited spa towns in Hungary for the year 2023, excluding Budapest due to its unique status. Sárvár ranks 6th on this list, ahead of several larger cities such as Debrecen, Szeged, and Győr. Although the number of hashtags mentions depends on numerous factors—such as the city's marketing activity, the engagement of local residents, the activity of visiting tourists, and even the size of the city—these mentions cannot be filtered exclusively for tourism-related posts. Therefore, the data includes all posts in which the town is mentioned, regardless of topic.

In terms of hashtag mentions, Sárvár ranks 8th, which places it in the strong mid-field. Considering the city's size, I believe this represents a respectable position compared to other settlements.

8.8 Love/Hate

The final element of the model—love or hate—aims to assess whether a destination can build a loyal customer base, consisting of visitors who return regularly and recommend the city to others, thereby generating positive word-of-mouth for the destination. Loyalty can be fostered through loyalty programs and exclusive offers.

According to a survey conducted last summer by Sárvár Tourist & TDM Nonprofit Ltd., approximately 70% of tourists visiting Sárvár are returning guests. [22]

Of the nearly 1,000 respondents, 55% had visited the spa town at least four times, and 74% stated that they definitely plan to return in the near future. Only 16% expressed uncertainty. The high proportion of returning guests is not only characteristic of domestic visitors. The responses show that 60% of international visitors had also previously been to Sárvár. [22]

The data clearly indicate that Sárvár enjoys a high rate of repeat visitors, even though the city itself does not offer an official loyalty program for tourists.

However, the hotels do operate loyalty schemes and related promotions, which allow them to keep track of their regular guests.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my study affirms that emotionally engaging, experience-based marketing plays a central role in tourism—especially when it involves digital content and campaigns tailored to the needs of specific target groups. Sárvár serves as a good example for other cities, as it successfully utilizes online marketing tools, with particular emphasis on social media campaigns, interactive games, and creative content.

In my analysis, I highlighted the key elements that have become indispensable in modern online marketing. These include a well-functioning, user-friendly website featuring creative solutions, as well as a social media presence that is up-to-date and visually consistent. It would be worthwhile to expand the city's presence beyond Facebook to platforms like Instagram and TikTok, which are increasingly preferred by Generation Z and Alpha users.

As a recommendation, I suggest placing greater emphasis on responding to negative comments, as negative feedback can also offer valuable insights into how to improve operational tasks more effectively and prevent recurring complaints or issues in the future.

While it may seem that a high number of returning guests eliminates the need for further engagement—since they revisit the destination year after year without additional promotional efforts—I believe it is still important to pay attention to loyal guests. Offering exclusive deals through direct marketing tools tailored specifically to them can strengthen this bond. Retaining loyal customers generally requires far less money and effort than attracting new ones.

Sárvár's example clearly demonstrates how strategic marketing communication and conscious development of tourism products can result in a high rate of returning visitors. This study offers relevant insights for other destinations aiming to enhance their competitiveness.

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