Saint Petersburg State University

Graduate School of Management

Bachelor of Information Management

DESIGNING A SYSTEM FOR TRACKING AND EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUTREACH EFFORTS AT TRAVELPAYOUTS

Consulting project for Travelpayouts

Bachelors Thesis by the 4th year student

of Information Management

Karpenko Yuliya

Academic Advisor:

Zhukova Sofia

Professor, Information Technologies in Management Department

Saint Petersburg

2021

ЗАЯВЛЕНИЕ О САМОСТОЯТЕЛЬНОМ ХАРАКТЕРЕ ВЫПОЛНЕНИЯ ВЫПУСКНОЙ КВАЛИФИКАЦИОННОЙ РАБОТЫ

Я студентка 4 курса программы бакалавриата «Информационный Менеджмент» подтверждаю, что в моей выпускной квалификационной работе на тему «Разработка системы учета и оценки эффективности аутрича в компании Travelpayouts», представленной в службу обеспечения программ бакалавриата для последующей передачи в государственную аттестационную комиссию для публичной защиты, не содержится элементов плагиата.

Все прямые заимствования из печатных и электронных источников, а также из защищенных ранее курсовых и выпускных квалификационных работ, кандидатских и докторских диссертаций имеют соответствующие ссылки.

Мне известно содержание п. 9.7.1 Правил обучения по основным образовательным программам высшего и среднего профессионального образования в СПбГУ о том, что «ВКР выполняется индивидуально каждым студентом под руководством назначенного ему научного руководителя», и п. 51 Устава федерального государственного бюджетного образовательного учреждения высшего профессионального образования «Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет» о том, что «студент подлежит отчислению из Санкт-Петербургского университета за представление курсовой или выпускной квалификационной работы, выполненной другим лицом (лицами)».

Карпенко Юлия

STATEMENT ABOUT THE INDEPENDENT CHARACTER OF THE BACHELOR THESIS

I, Yuliya Karpenko, 4th year bachelor student of the “Information Management”, state that my bachelor thesis on the topic “Designing a system for tracking and evaluating the effectiveness of outreach efforts at Travelpayouts” which is presented to the Bachelor Office to be submitted to the Official Defense Committee for the public defense, does not contain any elements of plagiarism.

All direct borrowings from printed and electronic sources, as well as from master theses, PhD and doctorate theses which were defended earlier, have appropriate references.

I am aware that according to paragraph 9.7.1. of Guidelines for instruction in major curriculum programs of higher and secondary professional education at St. Petersburg University «A master thesis must be completed by each of the degree candidates individually under the supervision of his or her advisor», and according to paragraph 51 of Charter of the Federal State Institution of Higher Professional Education Saint-Petersburg State University «a student can be expelled from St. Petersburg University for submitting of the course or graduation qualification work developed by other person (persons)».

Yuliya Karpenko

АННОТАЦИЯ

Автор	Юлия Карпенко
Название выпускной квалификационной работы	Разработка системы учета и оценки эффективности аутрича в компании Travelpayouts
Факультет	Высшая школа менеджмента
Направление подготовки	Информационный менеджмент
Год	2021
Научный руководитель	Жукова София
Описание цели, задач и основных результатов	Цель исследования заключалась в создании системы учета и оценки эффективности аутрича в компании Travelpayouts. Был проведен обзор литературы для того, чтобы дать определение аутричу, рассмотреть связанные организационные проблемы и описать канон измерения и отслеживания этой деятельности. Документация компании была изучена для понимания контекста и целей процесса. Был проанализирован и задокументирован бизнес процесс «аутрич» внутри компании Travelpayouts. Анализ выявил неэффективные и неотслеживаемые элементы процесса. С помощью эмпирического исследования, прототипирования, наблюдения, и интервью с экспертами был проведен сбор критериев отбора программного обеспечения. Был проведен подбор метрик для аутрича, подбор программного обеспечения для ведения деятельности, поставлены KPI и создана документация. Результат работы – система ведения деятельности по аутричу, позволяющая измерять и улучшать его эффективность.
Ключевые слова	Аутрич, анализ бизнес процессов, бизнес метрики, выбор программного обеспечения, KPI

ABSTRACT

Author	Yuliya Karpenko
Bachelor Thesis Title	Designing a system for tracking and evaluating the effectiveness of outreach efforts at Travelpayouts
Title Faculty	Graduate School of Management
Main field of study	Information Management
Year	2021
Academic Advisor's Name	Zhukova Sofia
Description of the goals, tasks and main results	The goal of this research was to to compile a system of conducting outreach for Travelpayouts that would allow tracking, evaluating, and improving its effectiveness. Literature review was conducted to define outreach, understand associated managerial challenges, and describe the canon of tracking and assessing outreach. Internal documentation of Travelpayouts was studied to understand the context and objectives of outreach. The process "as-is" was analyzed and visualized, and several tracking blindspots and bottlenecks were identified. Based on company goals and specifics of the process metrics were chosen and KPI set. Using an empirical study, prototyping, interviews with experts criteria for selecting software solution were identified. Criteria were used to select software environment. Documentation was created to disambiguate the process. As a result of the research a system was compiled that allowed Travelpayouts to track and improve outreach.
Keywords	Outreach, digital PR, business process analysis, performance metrics, KPI, selecting software

Contents

Introduction

The share of native advertising in overall marketing spending has been steadily growing has been growing, the trend is predicted to continue (Manic, 2015). This type of marketing communication takes many forms, including that of outreach. Outreach marketing is the process of establishing relationships with webmasters, content creators, and businesses to earn mentions of and links to a resource or product. Outreach can pursue goals ranging from building a backlink profile to improve search engine visibility to growing awareness through content marketing. For this reason, outreach stands on the intersection of Public Relations (PR), Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and other marketing spheres. It requires an understanding of all those spheres and relies on skills ranging from web resource assessment to copywriting.

Despite the prevalence of outreach, the majority of organizations manage it through outdated and haphazard processes (Impartner, n.d.). Rather than implementing one of the hundreds of efficient outreach and PR solutions, 59% of communications professionals organize their work through spreadsheets (Prezly, 2020). This adherence to familiar systems costs the companies an extra 5% of their workers' time (Prezly, 2020). It also negatively affects the transparency and measurability of processes, which complicates their improvement and prevents adequate prediction of results.

There are several factors that contribute to the inefficiencies associated with outreach. First, few academic studies were conducted in the field of outreach. In fact, the search results on Google Scholar indicate that exactly zero publicly available academic papers that study marketing outreach, although its aspects, digital PR and link-building, have been explored in journals and books. This lack of a systematic approach drives companies to rely on unverified internet content when building their outreach strategies. Second, there are hundreds of software solutions suitable for outreach, and no universal methodology for choosing one because of the different goals outreach can pursue and the variety of companies that perform it. The abundance of choice and lack of direction prompt communications professionals to continue working and storing contacts in outdated environments such as paper, email clients, and spreadsheets (*Results of the Global PR Survey*, 2020). Third, the current canon of assessing outreach is quantitative rather than qualitative, which inhibits its development and formalization.

This research has a four-part structure. Section 1 sets the research goal and divides its achievement into tasks. It also provides an overview of the field of outreach, its business application, and approaches to its conduct and measurement. Section 2 explores Travelpayouts as a business to provide context for the business process analysis that follows in Section 3. Section 4 focuses on choosing the appropriate metrics and software for outreach at Travelpayouts, as well as describes how the process was documented and redesigned. To achieve the research goal the following information sources were used: an empirical study, unstructured interviews, prototyping, corporate documentation, academic articles, web pages. The expected result of this research is the design of a system of conducting and measuring the effectiveness of outreach at Travelpayouts. The design would include metrics that indicate the effectiveness of the process, a choice of software for conducting outreach, and a bundle of documentation that formalizes the process.

Section 1. Understanding Outreach

1.1. Research Goal and Tasks

The subject of this paper is the process of outreach at Travelpayouts. It suffered from all three of the associated challenges — poor academic coverage of outreach, an abundance of software and lack of methodology for choosing one, and absence of a definitive assessment framework. Before the start of the research the process was largely undocumented, irregular, was tracked in a spreadsheet, and relied heavily on the judgment and skills of an executor (personal communication, Feb 6, 2021). This posed several managerial problems for Travelpayouts:

- Difficulty in assessing the worthwhileness of the process;
- Difficulty in reporting and predicting the cost and value of the results of outreach;
- Regular knowledge loss and a steep learning curve for new employees (personal communication, February 6, 2021).

This research has theoretical and practical value. It attempts to define outreach using authoritative sources and documents the current cannon of tracking and assessing it. It documents and analyzes outreach as a business process within a medium-sized business in the IT sector. As for the practical value, this research provided solutions for managerial problems associated with outreach at Travelpayouts.

To solve Travelpayouts' business problem as well as expand academic knowledge of outreach, this research focuses on addressing the following **goal**: to compile a system of conducting outreach that would allow tracking, evaluating, and improving its effectiveness.

To achieve the stated goal the several tasks have to be completed. Table 1 contains a numbered list of tasks, their expected outputs, and criteria that would signify their successful completion.

Table 1

Overview Of The Project Objectives, Outputs, And Success Criteria

Task №	**Task description**	**Task output**	**Success criteria**
1	Understand outreach as a business process by defining it, exploring managerial challenges associated with it, and exploring the current canon of tracking and evaluating it.	Definition of outreach, literature review evaluation methods, an overview of tracking environments.	Define outreach, identify metrics that are commonly used to track outreach, identify different ways of tracking outreach.
2	Understand Travelpayouts as a business entity, what goals the company aims to accomplish through outreach.	Business model canvas for Travelpayouts, list of managerial problems the company faced in conducting outreach.	Business Model Canvas and a list of managerial problems associated with outreach are verified by Travelpayouts experts.
3	Analyze and visualize the current business process of outreach.	A diagram of elements involved in outreach and a diagram visualizing the process of outreach, a list of inefficiencies and bottlenecks within the process with recommendations on how to fix them.	Elements and flow of the business process are clearly represented, according to third-party experts. The list of process inefficiencies is verified by a representative of Travelpayouts familiar with the process.
4	Design an assessment system for the process of outreach.	Outreach metrics, process KPI.	Chosen metrics and the set KPI are approved by Travelpayouts experts.
5	Design a tracking and reporting system for the process of outreach.	Software choice criteria, documentation that disambiguates tracking blindspots, diagram visualizing the redesigned process of outreach.	Software choice criteria and chosen software are approved by Travelpayouts experts. The flow of the redesigned business process is clearly represented, according to third-party experts.

The research relied on several data sources and data gathering methods. Table 2 provides an overview of research data, describes it, and briefly outlines how it was used.

Table 2

Overview of Research Data and its Application

Type of source	Data source	Description	Application
primary	empirical study	6 months of fieldwork were gained before the start of this research.	Information from the empirical study was used throughout the paper.
primary	interviews	Five unstructured one-on-one interviews were conducted with Travelpayouts marketing and business development professionals that worked in or are familiar with the process of outreach. One unstructured group interview with PR specialists was conducted.	Interview results were used in Section 1 of this paper to understand outreach, in Section 2 as a source of information on Travelpayouts, and in Section 3 to gather criteria for choosing a software environment.
primary	prototyping	A spreadsheet continually expanded and automated over the course of 6 months served as a prototype of outreach tracking and assessing software.	Prototyping was used to gather criteria and necessary functionality for choosing a software environment.
secondary	Atlassian Confluence	All work processes at Travelpayouts are fully or partially documented. This documentation as well as performance reports and information about the company itself are stored in Confluence, a web-based corporate database.	Data from Confluence was used for the company overview in Section 2.
secondary	academic papers	Academic papers about PR, digital marketing, SEO, and other adjacent topics.	Information from academic papers was used throughout the paper for providing context and insight.
secondary	web pages	Information in the form of blog posts, articles, survey results, etc. on the topics of outreach, PR, digital marketing, SEO, and other adjacent topics.	Information from web pages was used for literature review in Section 1.3 and through the rest of the paper.

The research was conducted using several IT resources. Names, descriptions, and applications of the resources can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

It Resources Used For The Research

Resource	Description	Application
Google Docs Editors	web-based office suite, which includes spreadsheet and word processing software	Spreadsheets were used for miscellaneous data work. A word processing program was used to write and edit this paper.
Microsoft Visio	diagramming and vector graphics application	Visio was used to build diagrams of business processes.

1.2. Definition and Scope of Outreach

‘Outreach’ is a broadly used term. In the context of brick-and-mortar institutions, the term applies to services provided outside the institution, in communities in need of them, or of interest to the organization (*Maximising the Role of Outreach…* , 2013). The instruments of such ‘analog outreach’ are printed promotional materials, outdoor advertising, displays in local public spaces such as libraries, and events. The goal of ‘analog outreach’ is to bring ideas and practices of a group of individuals or an organization to other organizations, audiences, or the public in general (*What Is Outreach Marketing?*, 2020). If the institution conducting outreach is self-funded, then the end goal is one that all firms share — making a profit. Therefore, ‘analog outreach’ can be defined as an effort to deliver a service to a target community (IES, 2013).

In the context of web-based business entities, the basic objective of outreach stays the same — spreading information. The networks, through which it is performed, are the Internet and relationships cultivated by the organization with firms and individuals. The tools used are the same as in digital marketing: social media, websites, emails, and online advertising, apps, etc. (Chaffey & Smith, 2017). In a for-profit company, outreach is usually viewed as part of marketing communications since it directly affects such marketing metrics as brand awareness and the number of users/clients/readers. And digital marketing outreach (in this paper further referred to as ‘outreach’) is defined as the process of using email and social media to earn mentions of and backlinks to a product or resource through building relationships with content creators and other businesses. Outreach is sometimes referred to as “digital PR” since it also manages the spread of information between the company and the public.

Outreach as a business process can have different goals. One is accumulating passive web traffic. It is achieved through SEO and content marketing (Scott, n.d.). And within the scope of outreach, this goal can be reduced to earning ‘dofollow’ backlinks, external citations of a page, or, in a word, link-building. ‘Dofollows’ are links that lead back to the website of the company that is performing outreach and are without a ‘nofollow’ attribute. Gaining ‘dofollows’ improves the position in search results of a website that is linked to.

Outreach as part of an off-page SEO strategy is shown to outperform the pursuit of social sharing or paid advertising in the long run. Companies and websites that do link-building see greater growth of traffic, higher domain authority, and position in search results (Zhang & Cabage, 2017).

Figure 1

Examples of dofollow and nofollow links

Example of a ‘dofollow’

```
<a href="https://example.com">Anchor Text</a>
```

Example of a ‘nofollow’

```
<a href="https://example.com" rel="nofollow">Anchor Text</a>
```

Other possible goals of outreach are expanding the user/client base or building awareness about the company. Both are helped by link-building but are primarily achieved through placing mentions within the content and doing other promotional activities with companies, websites, or influencers that are of interest to the target audience.

Outreach can also be focused on cultivating media partnerships, relationships between two business entities (companies, web resources, etc.). It is continued and mutually beneficial. It can involve cross-promotion, offering discounts or deals to the audience of the media partner, participating or supporting marketing specials of the media partner, and other forms of partnership. The reason behind cultivating media partnerships from outreach is streamlining the process of gaining audience and awareness through establishing relationships and agreements.

Regardless of the goal, the process of outreach stays the same. It can be summarized thus:

1. Planning the outreach campaign: selecting campaign keywords, setting KPIs and target values for metrics;
2. Selecting web resources (pages, articles, directories) that have enough authority and traffic to influence the awareness about the product;
3. Finding contact information of the people with the power to edit the resource;
4. Reaching out to them via email or social media with a request to mention or include a link to the product, or do another promo activity;
5. Negotiating the terms of placements;
6. Ensuring that activity gets carried out, a mention or link gets and remains placed;
7. Assessing the effect of the campaign (conventionally after at least a month, up to a year).

1.3. Outreach Outsourcing: reasons and impact

Outreach combines menial work and knowledge work. The former aspect is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “not requiring much skill”. Within the process of outreach, it includes looking for contact details, inputting them into databases, sending out template emails, following up, and checking that agreements are respected. When not completely automated these tasks are time-consuming and repetitive, according to industry professionals (*Results of the Global PR Survey 2020*, 2020).

At the same time, parts of the process of outreach can be likened to “knowledge work”. As defined by Peter Drucker in 1959, it is “the work of workers who use intangible resources as their primary assets” (*13th International Conference on Intellectual Capital Knowledge Management & Organisational Learning*, n.d., p. 297). To perform well outreachers need to have command of their business language (usually English), be skilled at business communications, know and be able to apply appropriately the principles of negotiation, be able to write copy and native-looking text.

Managers that are unfamiliar with the process of outreach tend to focus on its menial components, which drives them to outsource it, shift its performance to a supplier (Drahokoupil and Fabo, 2018). The prevalence of this decision is evidenced by hundreds of thriving agencies that offer link-building services (*Top 100 Link Building Services*, n.d.). A particular line of thinking leads to outreach being outsourced. It is primarily associated with SEO, link-building in particular. And SEO is considered menial work, even though certain tasks within can be automated (Marketer, 2019). It is generally accepted that resources should be saved as much as possible on menial work and invested into value-creating work (Amiti & Wei, 2014), and 60% of companies turn to outsourcing as the means of reducing cost (*Why and What Do Companies Outsource*, 2017).

There are challenges associated with work being performed outside the boundaries of a company. The ones relevant to outreach are as follows:

- Outsourced workers have significantly less incentive to improve the efficiency of their work or even maintain it (Elmuti et al., 2010).
- When outreach is outsourced, it does not benefit from the company's non-quantifiable and non-transferrable synergy, implicit knowledge, and communal creativity (Elmuti et al., 2010).
- If outreach is offshored, outsourced to a firm in a different country, then the meaning and effectiveness of communication comprising outreach can be lost due to language barriers and differences in culture (Elmuti et al., 2010).
- Outsourced outreachers are unfamiliar with the company's culture and strategy. They are also not managed directly by the staff of the company who could provide guidance. Consequently, brand damage and loss of profits could result from workers communicating out-of-line with the company's strategy, tone of voice, or interest.
- According to Tim Askew (2015), doing outreach through link-building agencies makes excludes the possibility of building a lasting partnership. Askew suggests that such agencies are assessed based on the number and quality of backlinks that result from their work, so that is what they focus on. Their staff is also not trained or authorized to make agreements on behalf of the company that extends beyond link exchange and sale (Askew, 2015).

The alternative to outsourcing outreach is doing it in-house. In this case, the company has greater control over the quality of results, can improve efficiency by automating and improving processes, and can be more partnership-focused in its approach. The last point can help significantly cut down on the labor costs. Using a pre-existing relationship to make a deal reduces negotiation time as all parties are familiar with each other's interests and capabilities. It also completely does away with sourcing contacts and catching attention through repeated reaching out. The latter is often the most time-consuming and difficult part of outreach, as only 8.5% of all outreach emails are responded to, with less influential companies and bloggers being more likely to respond (SEO Tribunal, 2019).

1.4. Canon of tracking and assessing outreach

1.4.1. Measuring Outreach

Metrics are a way to judge the effectiveness of a process. They are essential for maintaining the health of the pipeline and identifying inefficiencies (KlipFolio, n.d.). For each subprocess, several metrics can be tracked to better locate the points of improvement.

Outreach lies on the intersection of Public Relations (PR), Search Engine Optimization (SEO), influencer marketing, and other marketing communications. To understand which metrics are currently used to track outreach, a literature review was conducted. 20 articles from authoritative resources, that have a high search engine result page position, that speak about measuring outreach, digital PR or link-building, are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Outreach Metrics For Seo (Link-building) And Awareness (Earned And Paid Media)

Metric	Frequency	Subject of Measurement
campaign metrics		
links/mentions placed	15	brand presence
response rate	5	quality of the email body
open rate	4	engagement; effectiveness of the subject
placement rate	3	pitch quality and efficacy
emails sent	2	scope of the campaign
decline rate	2	engagement
cost of outreach	2	productivity and negotiation skills
time to first placement	2	efficiency; how well targeted the pitch is
total dofollow links	2	campaign efficacy
total $ value of links/mentions	2	quality of placements
delivery rate	2	domain health
placement page metrics		
domain authority of each site	6	backlink value of the entire domain
reach	5	quality of placements
impressions	3	quality of placements
total domain authority	2	SEO value of the campaign
relevance	2	quality of placements
branded search volume	1	quality of placements
Alexa ranking	1	quality of placements
SERP position	1	quality of placements
traffic	1	quality of placements
effect on home resource		
referral traffic	11	quality of placements
overall traffic increase	4	increase of brand awareness
referral traffic behavior	3	quality of placements
keyword ranking	2	SEO-effect of campaign
branded search volume	1	increase of brand awareness

Note: Table was compiled using the following sources ((*1 - Digital PR Metrics to Track to Show Your Value*, 2018, *7 Metrics for Measuring PR Success*, 2017, *7 Powerful KPIs to Measure Your Link Building Outreach*, n.d., *Digital PR Metrics to Track to Show Your Value*, 2018, *How to Measure PR: The Definitive Guide*, n.d., *How to Measure the Results of a PR Campaign?*, 2021, *The Only Earned Media Strategy You'll Ever Need*, 2019, *What Is Digital PR and Why Is It Important?*, n.d.; Beadell, 2014; Carlisle, n.d.; Comcowich, 2018; Dudharejia, 2018; Edwards, 2021; Harte, 2021; ODonoghue, 2020; Rosenfeld, 2019; Sharma, 2018; Thompson, 2019; Threlkeld, 2019; Walter, 2021)

Three groups of metrics emerged as a result of the literature review: metrics that track the flow and results of the campaign, metrics intended to evaluate the target resource, and metrics that measure the effect of the campaign on the company. Each group had an outlier metric — one mentioned the most. For each group respectively they were the number of links/mentioned placed during the campaign, domain authority of the target resource, and the amount of referral traffic from each resource.

1.4.2 Environments

An essential element of all marketing communication jobs, including outreach, is maintaining the database of contacts. According to the survey of 400 marketing communications professionals conducted by Prezly, 45% of participants name contact database maintenance their most "frustrating" recurring task (Prezly, 2020). In PR the contacts are journalists and editors, in influencer marketing — bloggers, celebrities, and content creators, in outreach contacts range from bloggers and online media editors to webmasters. The information that has to be stored and updated includes names-in-use and pseudonyms, email addresses and social media profiles, company or website affiliation, the scope of responsibilities, and more.

Contact databases can be stored in different environments: on paper, within email clients, in software systems, and in spreadsheets. The latter is the most popular environment used by 59% of communication professionals (Prezly, 2020). In all environments, the gold standard is to maintain contact relevance by updating “on the go”, with 51% of Prezly’s respondents renewing the database almost daily. The frequency of interaction with the environment brings convenience and efficiency to the forefront. Lack thereof adds up to extra costs for the company in the form of wasted time. According to Prezly’s Survey, the most widespread environment, spreadsheets, is one of the least efficient (see Table 5).

Prezly’s research makes it obvious that software is the preferable environment. In addition to saving time on data entry and updating, the software is also capable of storing communication history and automatically tracking metrics. Thousands of software solutions that outreachers use can be grouped into three categories: Customer Relationship Management systems (CRMs), PR software, and link-building software.

Table 5

Prevalence and Efficiency of The Contact Database Storage Environments

Storage Environment	Prevalence	Time on Maintenance, Hours/Month
On paper	3%	63
Email	12%	18
Software	24%	14
Spreadsheets	59%	22

Note: Information in the table gleaned from Prezly’s PR Survey Report (2020)

CRMs are software systems for managing interactions with customers, building relationships with them, and tracking deals (Microsoft, n.d.). Although the basic functionality is the same in all solutions, the market is not homogenous. Solutions can be on-premise or cloud-based, which lands them in SaaS (Software as a Service) sector. The latter are cheaper and require less technical knowledge, although they are less customizable. CRMs are also commonly divided into B2C (Business-to-Customer) and B2B (Busines-to-Business) niches. The split is prompted by the difference in sales cycle length, the number of people involved in a deal, and the overall complexity required (Totah, 2020).

There are more than 2000 Customer Relations Management solutions on the market in 2021 (*CRM vs. BRM vs. PRM? What Should You Get?*, n.d.). According to Backlinko's report, Salesforce dominates the market of CRMs with a 20% share (*Salesforce 2021 Revenue and Market Share Statistics*, 2021). The same report states that another 18% of the market is split between Oracle, SAP, Adobe, and Microsoft. Other notable players include Genesys, Zendesk, HubSpot, and Pegasystems (Pang, 2020).

Software solutions for PR have the same objective as CRMs: they help keep contact databases organized and up-to-date to improve communication. For this reason, they are sometimes referred to as PR CRMs, PRMs, or media relations CRMs. While CRMs are tailored for professionals whose main purpose is to make sales, PR software is focused on building long-term relationships with media professionals. This is reflected in the information about each contact that is gathered and stored, the metrics that are tracked. However, the key distinctive feature of PR software is that its functionality extends to building lists of target resources based on keywords, content, and resource type.

PRstack.co, the most extensive crowd-sourced catalog, currently lists 250 PR tools and environments. Different sources name the following solutions as market leaders: Cision, Isentia, Meltwater, IPG, Omnicom, WPP, Agility, Brand24, Mention, and Onalytica (Business Wire, n.d.; The Courier, 2021).

The final category of software suitable for outreach is link-building tools. These environments are tailored to those who build backlinks. They are often part of larger SEO-focused software. They generally offer less functionality than CRMs when it comes to relationship management while providing access to features such as monitoring a websites' backlink profile, detailed review of website SEO metrics, and the search for backlink opportunities (*Link Building Tool: Earn Backlinks from Authority Domains*, n.d.). Some notable link-building tools are SEMrush link-building tool, Ahrefs link-building tool, and Moz Pro.

In this section of the paper, a definition of outreach was formulated. Outreach was put within the context of a modern web-based organization: its goals, scope, and associated challenges were discussed. In Subsection 1.3. Common approaches to tracking and measuring outreach were presented. Research Task 1 was completed in this section (see Table 1).

2. Outreach in the Context of Travelpayouts

2.1. Company Profile

2.1.1. Travelpayouts Overview

Travelpayouts is a subsidiary of the Hong Kong Limited Liability Company "Go Travel Un Limited", which operates under the brand names Aviasales, JetRadar, and Hotellook. A limited liability company in Hong Kong is an entity that is legally separate from its members, meaning that the personal assets of its members are protected from risks (*Types of Companies in Hong Kong*, n.d.).

Travelpayouts was founded in 2010 to be Aviasales's affiliate program. In 2011 Travelpayouts got its name and turned from a supporting department into an independently operated business entity. In time, Travelpayouts got its own team and CEO. Its strategy doesn't serve the interests of Aviasales.

Since 2011 Travelpayouts grew into an affiliate network in the travel niche. Affiliate networks serve as intermediaries between webmasters and content creators and merchants with affiliate programs. According to Gallaugher et al., affiliate marketing is a kind of online advertising, characterized by merchants sharing a percentage of sales revenue with individuals or firms that lead the customers to the merchant's website.

In May 2021, Travelpayouts serves as an intermediary between 300 000 partners — webmasters, bloggers, influencers, travel agencies, and companies possessing traffic interested in travel — and more than 80 travel brands. There are currently 90 affiliate programs available on the platform, with some brands hosting multiple programs. Some notable brands available at the Travelpayouts network are Booking.com, RentalCars, TripAdvisor, Hotels.com, GetYourGuide, and Aviasales.

Travelpayouts' purpose is to allow its users to monetize their content and traffic through non-invasive and contextually relevant advertising. A typical example of this can be seen in Figure 2 — an article on thetravelbunny.com is monetized with Travelpayouts' affiliate link.

Travelpayouts works on a CPA model. Every timethetravelbunny.com reader clicks the affiliate link, a cookie is saved on their computer. If they make a purchase within the cookie's lifetime period, the owner of thetravelbunny.com receives a commission from Travelpayouts that is in turn part of a commission that Travelpayouts receives from getyourguide.com, where the link in the example leads.

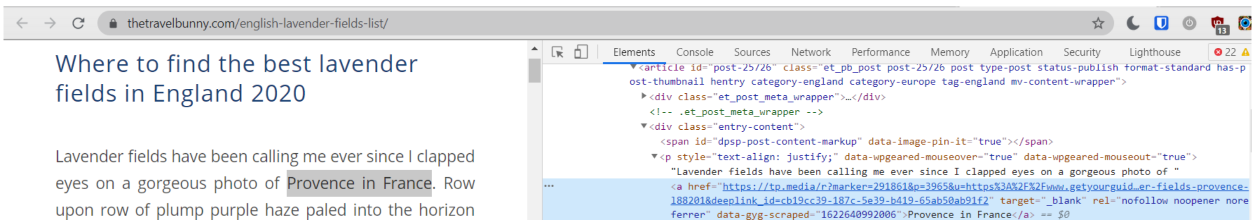
Travelpayouts is essentially a platform for monetizing traffic. Travelpayouts competitors can be divided into several groups:

- Direct competitors
    - In-house travel affiliate programs: Booking, Agoda, GetYourGuide, Amazon Associates, Airbnb, Skyscanner
    - Affiliate networks that have travel affiliate programs: CJ Affiliate, Rakuten, Awin, ShareASale, Admitad

- Indirect competitors
  - Traffic monetization platforms: Skimlinks, Mediavine, Google Adsense
  - For advertisers — marketing performance management platforms: Affise, Partnerize, Voluum, Impact Radius (personal communication Feb 6, 2021)

Figure 2

Travelpayouts Affiliate Link Used to Monetize a Website



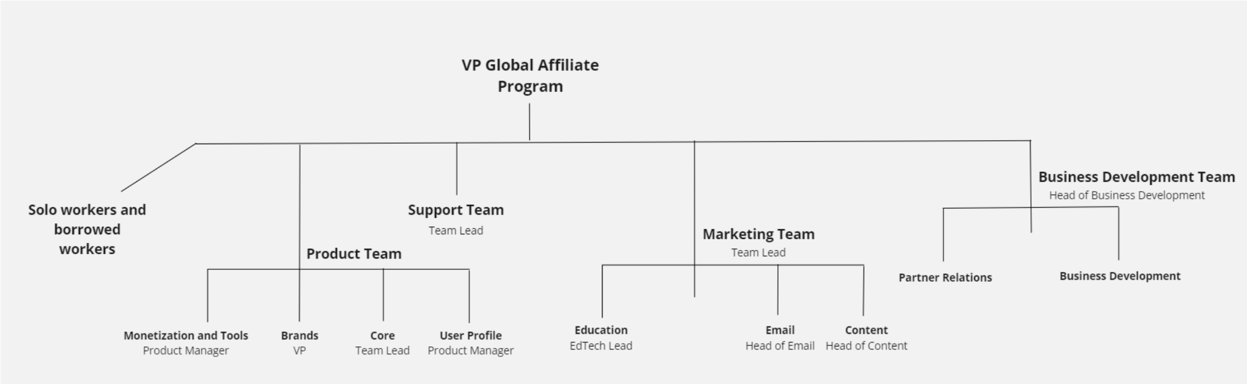
Note: Screenshot taken from https://thetravelbunny.com/english-lavender-fields-list/

2.1.2. Company Structure

Travelpayouts used to have a flat hierarchy with the Vice President (VP) and four teams: 3 were composed of 1 leader and equals and marketing functioned as a holacracy. The 2020 pandemic wrecked the travel industry and urged Travelpayouts to adopt a new structure, one that would allow for faster decision-making and more flexibility. The Marketing Team got a Team Lead, and smaller teams were formed within. Figure 3 is a visual representation of the organizational structure of Travelpayouts as of May 2021.

Figure 3

The Organizational Structure Of Travelpayouts In May 2021



Travelpayouts' headquarters are in Phuket, Thailand, where the VP and the majority of the Product team resides. However, Travelpayouts is a "remote-first" company. Even though there are offices in Phuket, Thailand, Moscow, and Saint Petersburg, Russia, workers are not required to attend them. This principle enables the company to hire talents regardless of their location as well as use contractual workers and outsourcing organically. The latter is an implicit element of the company structure in Figure 3. Dozens of contractual workers are employed by the company and are present in each team. This style of organization also allows for employees of Aviasales, the parent company of Travelpayouts, to be borrowed to decrease the spending on outsourcing.

Travelpayouts' approach to managing, planning, and reporting is based on SCRUM and Agile frameworks. Both are traditionally used in development teams, which was all of Travelpayouts at the beginning and now comprises around 60% of the workforce. The authentic framework was adopted by other teams as they appeared. It determined corporate traditions, work routines, and processes.

2.1.3. Business Model

A business model is a way of creating value. It can include in its scope key business processes, strategies, value propositions, assets, organizational structure, culture, and practices. George and Bock (2011) equate a business model to a design of organizational structure that allows to take advantage of commercial opportunity. The purpose of every business model is to bring together all aspects of doing business in such a way that the company can generate profit (George & Bock, 2011).

To describe the business model of Travelpayouts Business Model Canvas was built (see Figure 17). It is a framework formulated by Alex Osterwalder in his work “The Business Model Ontology A Proposition In A Design Science Approach” (2004).

As evidenced by the canvas, Travelpayouts relies solely on one revenue stream — the cut of affiliate commission. Therefore, the key partners of Travelpayouts are affiliates, webmasters and bloggers, who monetize their projects using affiliate tools. Travel brands or, as they are referred to internally, advertisers are also a key partner of Travelpayouts. Their quantity and quality make up Travelpayouts’ front-line value proposition.

2.2. History Of Outreach At Travelpayouts

Most marketing efforts at Travelpayouts are aimed at attracting new partners and new advertisers. Outreach is one of the ways for accomplishing that, and that was the initial purpose. Over time the objectives of outreach were broadened to include raising awareness about the network, managing the tone and messaging of the brand, increasing the authority of Travelpayouts, and attracting advertisers to the network.

Until July 2020, outreach at Travelpayouts was not a separate function. Both functions, placing mentions on target resources and working with incoming requests for collaboration, were performed irregularly by the Marketing Team staff. Blog editors, content writers, and other employees, whose emails are a matter of public knowledge, would receive emails from outreachers from other companies and make link exchange deals.

At the beginning of 2020, there was an attempt to make outreach a more systematic process and a tracking table was created (see Figure 4). The information that was tracked in the table is as follows:

- stage of the negotiation
- name of the resource editor
- contact of the webmaster in no particular form (It could be anything from an email to an indication that the webmaster was contacted through the contact form on their website.)
- Date of the last interaction

All the columns were filled manually. All the color highlights were also made manually, and no legend for them was provided.

Travelpayouts out face several managerial problems associated with outreach. The effort lacked cohesion and planning because it was done by several different people. The effort was also irregular because it was no one workers responsibility which made its results unpredictable. Because the effort was so haphazard and was so inconsistently tracked, it was difficult to measure its costs and the value it created. Outreach was untransparent, which created difficulties for managers and human resources specialists when it came to measuring worker performance.

In this section Travelpayouts was analyzed as a business entity. The section provided an overview of the company, its values, practices, and structure. Travelpayouts' business model was analyzed and visualized using a business model canvas, and the result was verified by Travelpayouts Head of Marketing. The overall analysis provided context for the process of outreach and its goals. Subsection 2.2 also listed the challenges that the company faced in managing outreach before July 2020. Research Task 2 was completed in this section.

Figure 4

Outreach Tracking Table Used Before July 2020

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Keyword	URL	Status	Comment	Автор	Email	Дата
2		https://monitorbacklinks.com/blog/a	Первый имейл		Amy Copadis	hello@amycopadis.com	22/04/2020
3	travel affiliate	https://www.digitalfodder.com/best-	Получили ответ	Хочет 55$, общаемся	Chad Tennant	LI	22/04/2020
4		https://traveltractions.com/affiliate-j	Первый имейл		Matt Davidson	matt@traveltractions.com	22/04/2020
5		https://bloggerspassion.com/best-t	Первый имейл		Anil Agarwal	anil@bloggerspassion.com	22/04/2020
6		https://www.onlinepassiveincome1	Первый имейл		Sebastian E		22/04/2020
7		https://toptechytips.com/top-travel-	Размещено	Готово	?		22/04/2020
8	best travel affiliate prog	https://ucompares.com/travel-affilia	Первый имейл		?		22/04/2020
9		https://www.somtoseeks.com/25-to	Первый имейл		Somo Ugwueze		23/04/2020
10	travel affiliate network	https://tourscanner.com/blog/tours-	Первый имейл				23/04/2020
11		https://www.audienceplay.com/blog	Первый имейл				23/04/2020
12		https://www.forexreferral.com/best-	Первый имейл	Написал в Facebook	Jason Hoe		23/04/2020
13		https://www.outbrain.com/blog/7-to	Первый имейл	Написал в Facebook	Haran Rosenzweig		23/04/2020
14		https://solvid.co.uk/top-affiliate-mar		Отправил запрос в Li	Dmytro Spilka		23/04/2020
15		https://highpayingaffiliateprograms	Первый имейл				23/04/2020
16	best monetization platf	https://makeawebsitehub.com/affili	Первый имейл		Jamie	https://makeawebsitehub.com/about-m	23/04/2020
17		https://www.businessofapps.com/g	Первый имейл		Jamie Giggs		24/04/2020
18	affiliate programs rankii	https://diggitymarketing.com/conta	Первый имейл		Mark Diggity	Форма на сайте	24/04/2020

Note: Data was removed from the "contacts" column at the request of Travelpayouts.

3. Business Processes Analysis of Outreach

To accomplish the goal of this research — to put together a system of conducting outreach that would allow tracking and evaluating its effectiveness — a tracking environment and effectiveness metrics will have to be chosen as stated in the research tasks. To understand what the tracking environment will help accomplish, which criteria it will satisfy and which functions perform, it needs to be put into the contact of the business process it is meant to support (Mili et al., 2010). For this purpose, this section of the research paper will focus the analysis of outreach as a business process. Since later in the process of outreach will be modeled, forward engineered, according to recommendations, it is necessary to specify that the focus of this section is the process "as-is", in its current state.

3.1. Methodology

Hammer and Champy (2001) define a business process as a sequence of steps that produce a result valuable to the consumer. Business process mapping describes actions undertaken to identify the steps that comprise the business process, the business practices involved in accomplishing them, and the parties responsible (Hammer & Champy, 2001). To map outreach the following framework will be used:

1. Describe the process As-Is;
2. Identify elements of the process using a SIPOC diagram;
3. Understand the flow of the process using a diagram;
4. Specify improvement points;
5. Define the metrics of success for the process To-Be;
6. Model the process To-be.

The framework above as an amalgamation of the approaches to business process analysis suggested by BEM, a management consulting company that specializes on business process improvement (Business Enterprise Mapping, 2017), Tallyfy (2017) and Heflo (2015), leading process management software companies.

Before visualizing the process with a diagram, it is necessary to choose one of the dozens of modeling languages. Mili et al. (2010) state that different business process modeling languages address different facets of business processes: dynamic, functional, informational, organizational. They also range in formality, and the choice depends on intended use and audience (Mili et al., 2010).

In their 2014 paper “Business process modeling languages: Sorting through the alphabet soup” Mili et al. suggest the following framework for selecting a BPM language:

1. Know the purpose.
2. Choose the most widely used language.
3. Choose the option with the most extensibility.
4. Try to use only one language.

The purpose of modeling the business process is to describe the process clearly to a human and analyze it qualitatively to find inefficiencies. The language needs to support the informational view of a business process to track the flow of contact data and information. The organizational view is also needed — to represent how the stages of outreach can be handled by different actors. The criteria above ruled out all languages but EDOC and UML2 (Mili et al., 2010) as evidenced by Figures 5 and 6. Considering that EDOC is technically an extension of UML2, the latter was chosen for all the diagrams in this paper.

Figure 5

A Comparison of Process Modeling Languages in Terms of Coverage

Language	Informational view	Functional view	Dynamic view	Organizational view
IDEF0		Definitely		
IDEF1	Definitely			
IDEF3			Definitely	
Petri nets			Definitely	
RAD	Somewhat		Definitely	Definitely
EPC	References		Definitely	References
REA		Definitely	Definitely	Definitely
AMBER	Somewhat		Definitely	Somewhat
OORAM	Definitely	Somewhat	Definitely	Somewhat
EDOC	Definitely	Definitely	Definitely	Definitely
UML2	Definitely	Definitely	Definitely	Has the ingredients
WPDL	References		Definitely	
BPML	References		Definitely	Somewhat
BPMN			Definitely	
WS-BPEL	References		Definitely	
BPDM		Somewhat	Definitely	Definitely
RosettaNet	Definitely		Definitely	
ebXML	Definitely		Definitely	Somewhat
WS-CDL	References		Definitely	

Note: This figure shows, which of the four views of a business process are supported by each modeling language: informal, describing elements of the process, functional, describing the transformation of the elements, dynamic, describing the timing of the process, organizational, representing assigned responsibility and actors. From “Business process modeling languages: Sorting through the alphabet soup” by H. Mili, G. Tremblay, G. B. Jaoude, É. Lefebvre, L. Elabed, G. E. Boussaidi, 2010, ACM Computing Surveys, Vol. 43, No. 1, p. 52 (DOI: 10.1145/1824795.1824799). Copyright 2010 by Association for Computing Machinery.

Figure 6

Potential Uses of the Various Languages

Language	Description		Analysis		Enactment	
	Human	Machine	Qualitative	Quantitative	Simulation	Execution
IDEF0	Yes		Yes			
IDEF1	Yes		Yes			
IDEF3	Yes		Yes			
Petri nets	Somewhat	Yes	Somewhat	Yes	Yes	Somewhat
RAD	Yes		Yes	Somewhat	Somewhat	
EPC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Possibly		
REA	Yes		Somewhat	Yes		
AMBER	Somewhat	Yes	Yes	Yes		
OORAM	Yes	Yes		Yes		
EDOC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Possibly	Yes	
UML2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Possibly	Yes	
WPDL		Yes			Yes	Yes
BPML	Yes				Yes	
BPMN	Yes	In the future	Yes	In the future		Potentially
WS-BPEL		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
BPDM	Yes			Yes		
RosettaNet	Yes		Yes		Somewhat	
ebXML		Yes	Yes		Somewhat	
WS-CDL	Yes	Yes		Yes		

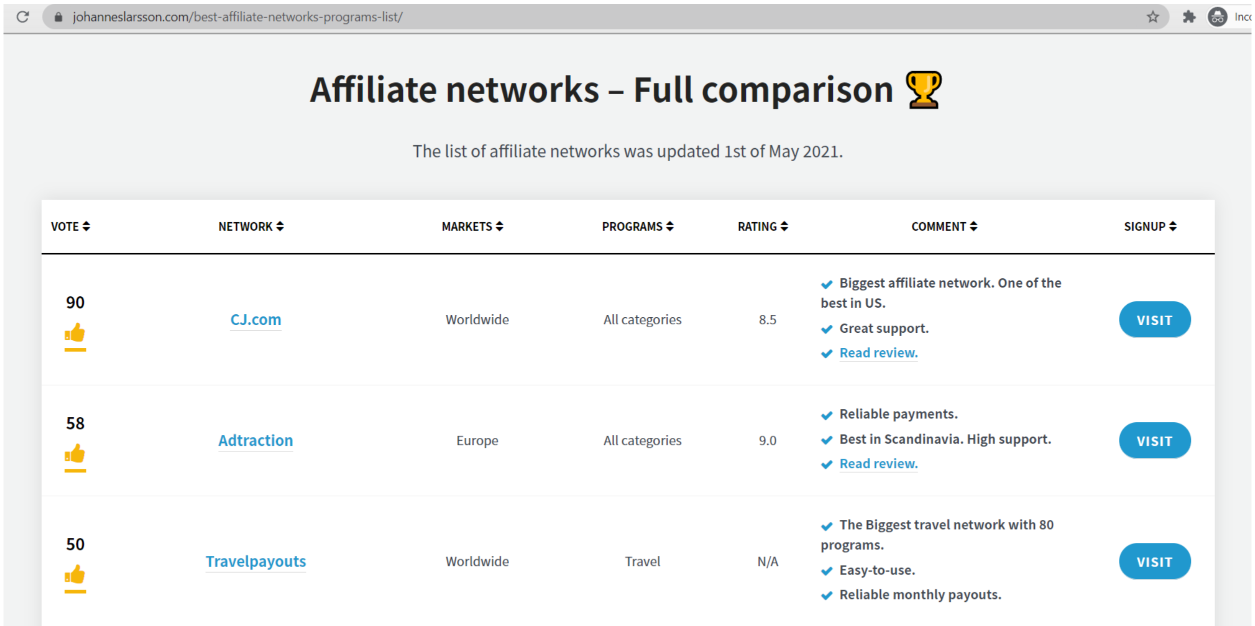
Note. This figure compares modeling languages along the potential use dimension of a process model: description, to either a machine or human, analysis, qualitative (for reengineering) or qualitative (for detecting bottlenecks); enactment, for simulation or execution. From “Business process modeling languages: Sorting through the alphabet soup” by H. Mili, G. Tremblay, G. B. Jaoude, É. Lefebvre, L. Elabed, G. E. Boussaidi, 2010, ACM Computing Surveys, Vol. 43, No. 1, p. 53 (DOI: 10.1145/1824795.1824799). Copyright 2010 by Association for Computing Machinery.

3.2. Analyzing “as-is” process of outreach

The main goal of outreach at Travelpayouts is to attract new partners to the network. The goal is achieved by placing in-context mentions of Travelpayouts where the target audience, webmasters and content creators with travel traffic, might see it (**Figure**). The resources include affiliate program directories, articles about content monetization, affiliate income, travel content creation, marketing in travel, and others.

Figure 7

Outreach Placement for Travelpayouts


johanneslarsson.com/best-affiliate-networks-programs-list/

Affiliate networks – Full comparison

The list of affiliate networks was updated 1st of May 2021.

VOTE	NETWORK	MARKETS	PROGRAMS	RATING	COMMENT	SIGNUP
90	CJ.com	Worldwide	All categories	8.5	Biggest affiliate network. One of the best in US. Great support. Read review.	VISIT
58	Adtraction	Europe	All categories	9.0	Reliable payments. Best in Scandinavia. High support. Read review.	VISIT
50	Travelpayouts	Worldwide	Travel	N/A	The Biggest travel network with 80 programs. Easy-to-use. Reliable monthly payouts.	VISIT

Outreach at Travelpayouts is not focused on SEO, and the desired outcome is a text mention, that persuades the reader of the resources to join the network. Although, any kind of link, nofollow or dofollow, is welcome, raising brand recognition and trust is key.

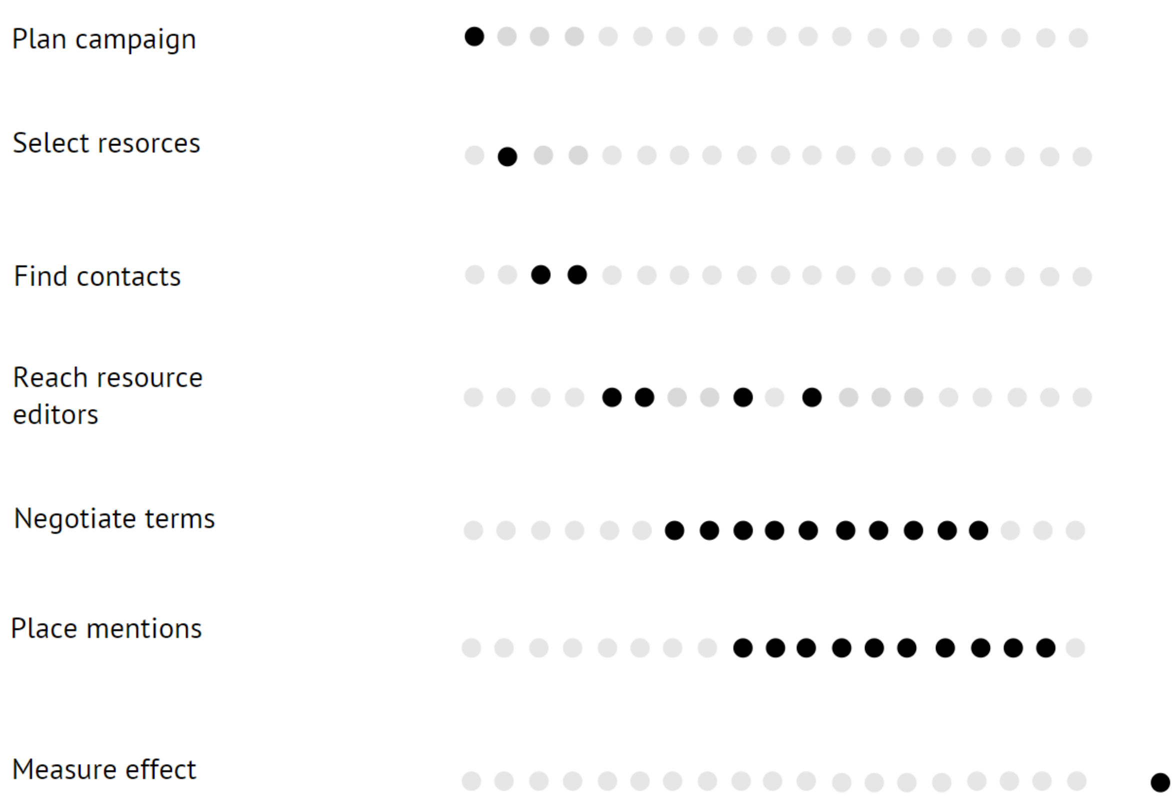
The process can be divided into 7 subprocesses:

1. plan campaign
2. select resources
3. find contacts
4. reach
5. negotiate
6. place mention
7. measure effect

The processes are started sequentially, one after the other. However, “reach”, “negotiate” and “place mention” are then performed in parallel as responses from webmasters arrive. The timing of the subprocesses is schematically represented in Figure.

Figure 8

Schematic Representation Of Subprocess Timing



3.2.1. Elements of the process

The general process of outreach has been broken down in Section 1 of this paper. At Travelpayouts, the process retains the same structure. To understand what elements (materials, information, systems, specialists, etc.) are involved in the process a modified SIPOC diagram was created (Table 6).

The diagram of Suppliers, Inputs, Processes, Outputs, and Customers (SIPOC) is an instrument that summarizes the inputs and outputs of a process. According to the American Society of Quality, SIPOC is used before the start of the process improvement to identify all relevant elements of the process and the links between them (*Quality Glossary of Terms, Acronyms & Definitions*, n.d.). The diagram also helps to identify gaps such as excess outputs and process steps, inefficiencies, and missing inputs (*SIPOC (suppliers, Inputs, Process, Outputs, Customers) Diagram*, 2016).

The “Customers” column was removed from the original framework for this analysis. Since the process is mostly conducted by one worker, the outreacher, they remain the customer through all but the last stage of the process.

No excess outputs were identified using the diagram. However, a plethora of missing input data and documentation (notably at the last stage) was noted and is described in depth in Section 3.2.3.

One of the inputs of the process as indicated by the diagram is the ‘spreadsheet’, which is a reference to the Google Sheet that is used to record the process and results of outreach. The table is store on the company Google Drive, a cloud-based restricted-access file storage system.

The spreadsheet for tracking outreach efforts was created on the basis of the legacy table (Figure 9) and gradually expanded based on practical requirements. The spreadsheet was automated with formulas, data validation, filters, conditional formatting for highlighting deals in different stages, and with Google Apps Scripts.

Table 6

Suppliers, Inputs, Processes, Outputs, and Customers diagram for outreach at Travelpayouts

Suppliers	Inputs	Process	Outputs
manager	company strategy results of the previous campaign	**plan campaign**	task with objectives
manager SEO-specialist outreacher	task with objectives list of ranking keywords initial parsed list of URLs selection criteria spreadsheet	**select resources**	list of URLs
outreacher	list of URLs search engine social media contact searching tools	**find contacts**	list of contact details
company outreacher	email client templates social media	**reach**	record of communication
outreacher & manager outreach outreacher	offer (payment, barter) templates negotiation skills	**negotiate**	deal terms
finance team, payment processor (PayPal, bank, etc.) member of the marketing team outreacher or copywriter	payment/promo activity social media text for the placement	**place mention**	mention of Travelpayouts on the webpage
manager / outreacher		**measure effect**	

Within the tracking environment, Google Sheets, separate sheets are used for outreach tracking and reporting. Sheet “status” contains information about, which resources are of interest and what has been done to obtain a mention from them, as well as other information. The table consists of 13 columns (Figure):

1. “source”, that records the origin of the URL;
2. “keyword”, that holds the keyword it ranks for if the resource was parsed;

3. “url” with the address of the resource;
4. “status”, where the stage of the deal is marked;
5. “comments”, where the progression of negotiations is recorded;
6. “last contact”, a column filled and rewritten automatically by a Google Script when changes are made to a corresponding “status”, “comments” or “results” fields;
7. “results”, that holds the terms of the negotiations, if they are successful;
8. “name” with the name of the contact person for the URL;
9. “email” the person’s email address;
10. “alt contact”, where social media contacts, phone numbers, etc. are recorded as back-up communication channels or in absence of an email address;
11. “next step” holds directions for the upcoming communication;
12. “when” indicates the supposed date of the next communication and serves as a scheduling tool in combination with the filter view;
13. “theme” states the overall theme of the resource.

Figure 9

Table Used to Track Outreach

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	source	keyword	url	status	comments	last contact	results	name	email	alt contact	next step	when	theme	
52	seo		breaking	contacted	reminded	07/08/2020					try another way		blogging\marketing	
53	seo		brooksco	done	1 mention of him, 2 of us here (the most tra	02/02/2021	2 mentions for 1 ment				remind	03/02		
54	seo		clickdo.c	done	provided text, offered Fb or blog mention	13/10/2020	provided text, offered							
55	seo		constantl	ongoing		19/02/2021								
56	seo		buildapre	contacted	reminded, fb, can't comment	13/10/2020		Spencer Mecham					blogging\marketing	
57	seo		buildyour	contacted		27/07/2020				https://www.buil	try another way		blogging\marketing	
58	seo		business		didn't find how to connect	28/07/2020								
59	seo		business	contacted	reminded, can't comment	25/08/2020							blogging\marketing	
60	seo		business	contacted	reminded, fb, can't comment more: businessofapps.com/affiliate/programs/	25/01/2021		Jamie Giggs						
61	seo		busybud	contacted	reminded	07/08/2020					try another way			
62	seo		capitalisr	contacted		28/01/2021		Victor			reminder 2	16/02		
63	seo		cashover	contacted	can't comment	24/08/2020		Pardeep Goyal		https://www.linke				
64	seo		cedcomn	contacted	reminded	07/08/2020					try another way			
65	seo		clickfunn	contacted		28/01/2021		Heidi			Особенно инт			
66	seo		colorlib.c	comment sub		25/07/2020					try another way			
67	seo		cloudway	contacted	reminded	07/08/2020					try another way			

Note: Data was removed from the “contacts” column at the request of Travelpayouts.

The sheet “results” helps to evaluate the effectiveness of the outreach and report on the results (Figure). The user chooses the year and month from the drop-down list and immediately sees the results of outreach efforts for that period.

Information from this automatically created table is used to track KPIs during the iteration, to prepare a slide in a presentation that the marketing department shares with the rest of the company at the end of each iteration and to create monthly, quarterly and yearly reports. The information is also used by managers and HR to assess that worker during “review” periods.

Figure 10

Table Used for Reporting the results of Outreach

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	**Выбери месяц**	august				
2	**Выбери год**	2020				
3	**В этом месяце разместились здесь**					
4	source	URL	Status	Comment	Last contact	result
5	seo	digitalfodder.com/best-trave	done	Wanted 55$, I asked for stats, he declined offered 50, asked for 65, I asked for a section, agrred, sent text	27/08/2020	$65 - blog mention
6	seo	somtoseeks.com/25-top-travel-	done		27/08/2020	free - blog mention
7	seo	highpayingaffiliateprograms.co	done	За деньги	21/08/2020	$200 - 1st ranking in artic
8	seo	popular10updates.com/best-af	done	said he'll do it, sent instructions, checked in, checked in again, answered questions, reminded за 5%	18/08/2020	free - blog mention
9	seo	stayathomemum.com.au/work-	done	wants $330 AUD for link, stats, requesting bank details, agredd to place us number 1	27/08/2020	$232 - 1st ranking in artic
10	seo	gettinggrowth.com/how-to-mor	done	написала текст, отправила инструкцию на реф. ссылку, reminded, checked in	31/08/2020	free - blog mention
				link placed, negotiating context, waiting for payment details		

3.2.2. The flow of the process

To understand the flow of the process “as-is” several activity diagram were constructed. According to Bennett (2004), an activity diagram describes the dynamic behavior of a system by mapping activities and actions. In the later part of this paper an activity diagram is used in its other application: to plan an executable system by using forward engineering (*UML - Activity Diagrams*, n.d.).

The diagram in Figure 11 demonstrates the high-level flow of the process. It is divided into swimlanes, areas assigned to different actors, to indicate the members of the team and outside parties that participate in the process of outreach. The actors in outreach are the outreach, the marketing manager that supervises the outreach and determines the direction of work, the SEO specialist, and a webmaster. Comments on the diagram provide context for the steps of the process.

The process is divided into subprocesses. The activities Figure 11, 12, and 13 are numbered to show, which subprocess they belong to. The activities numbered 1 are part of the “plan campaign” subprocess, are performed by the manager, and typically take up around one business day.

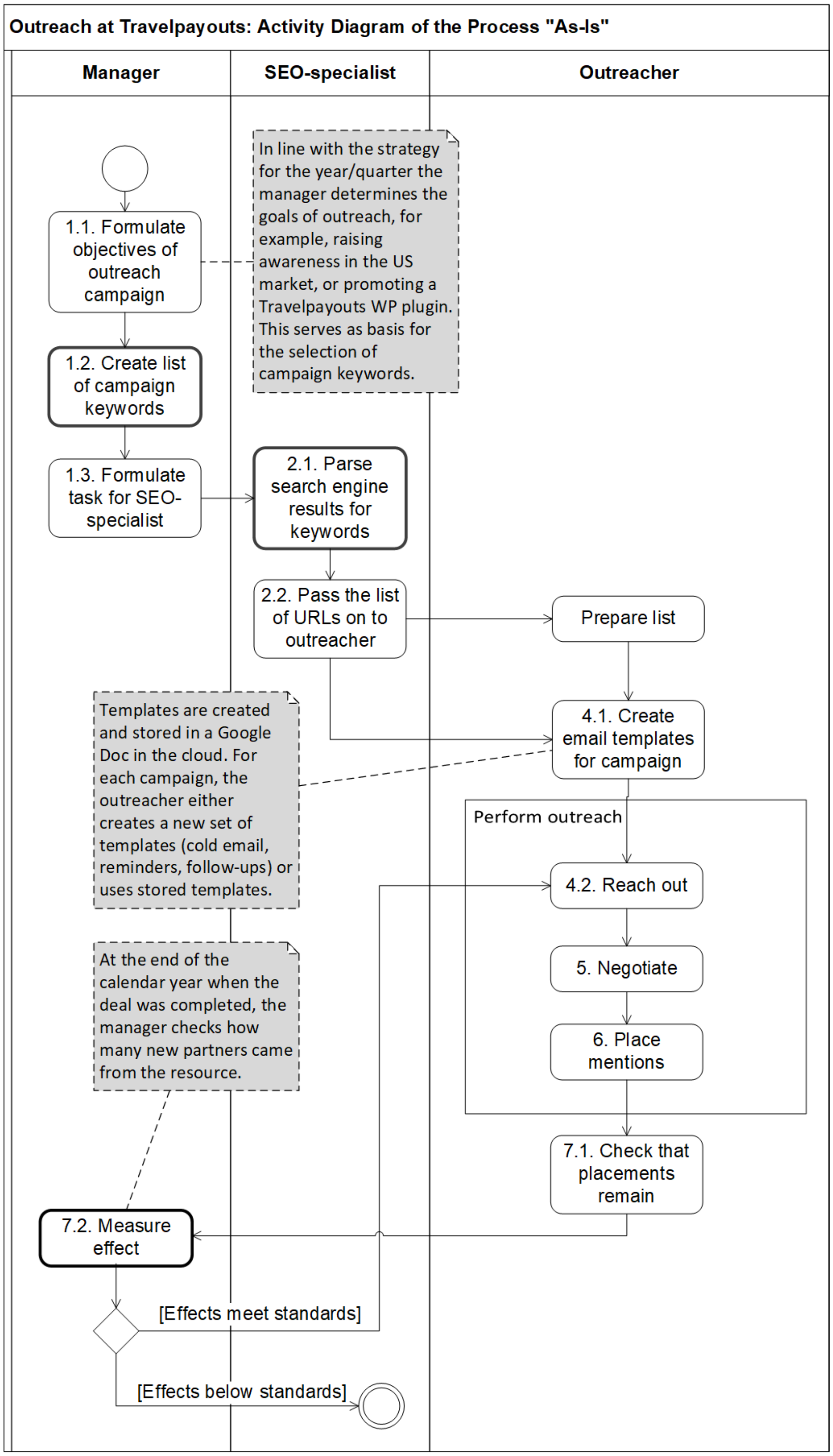
The activities numbered 2 pertain to the “select resources” subprocess. The part that is performed by the SEO specialist takes up to 0.5 business days, but additional two days are always assumed to account for the specialist’s higher-priority tasks and for passing the information. The outreacher spends another 0.5 of a business day on the purging of the list. Activities that are part of the “find contact information” subprocess (numbered 3) take up from one to two business days to complete, depending on the size of the resource list. They are performed by the outreacher.

“Find contact information” concludes the preparation phase for the campaign. The “reach resource editors” subprocess (activities numbered 4) is initiated first and then done in parallel with activities of “negotiate terms” (numbered 5) and “place mentions” (numbered 6), as the responses from webmasters arrive. They comprise the active phase of the campaign and take several months to complete. During this period the time commitment of the outreacher is uneven as responses from webmasters arrive unpredictably.

The last stage of the outreach process is “measure results” and is numbered 7 on the diagram. It is done by the manager due to information access restriction. It takes one to two business hours depending on the amount of concluded deals.

Figure 11

Activity Diagram of the Process of Outreach "As-Is"



The diagram in Figure 12 zooms in on the process of preparing the list of URLs. This bundle of tasks is performed by the outreach before the start of the campaign. Its purpose is to purge the initial list of unsuitable resources first and then find contact information (name of the person with power to edit the resource, their email address, their social media) for the resources that remain in the list.

Figure 12

Activity Diagram Showing URL List Preparation: the Process for Each URL in List

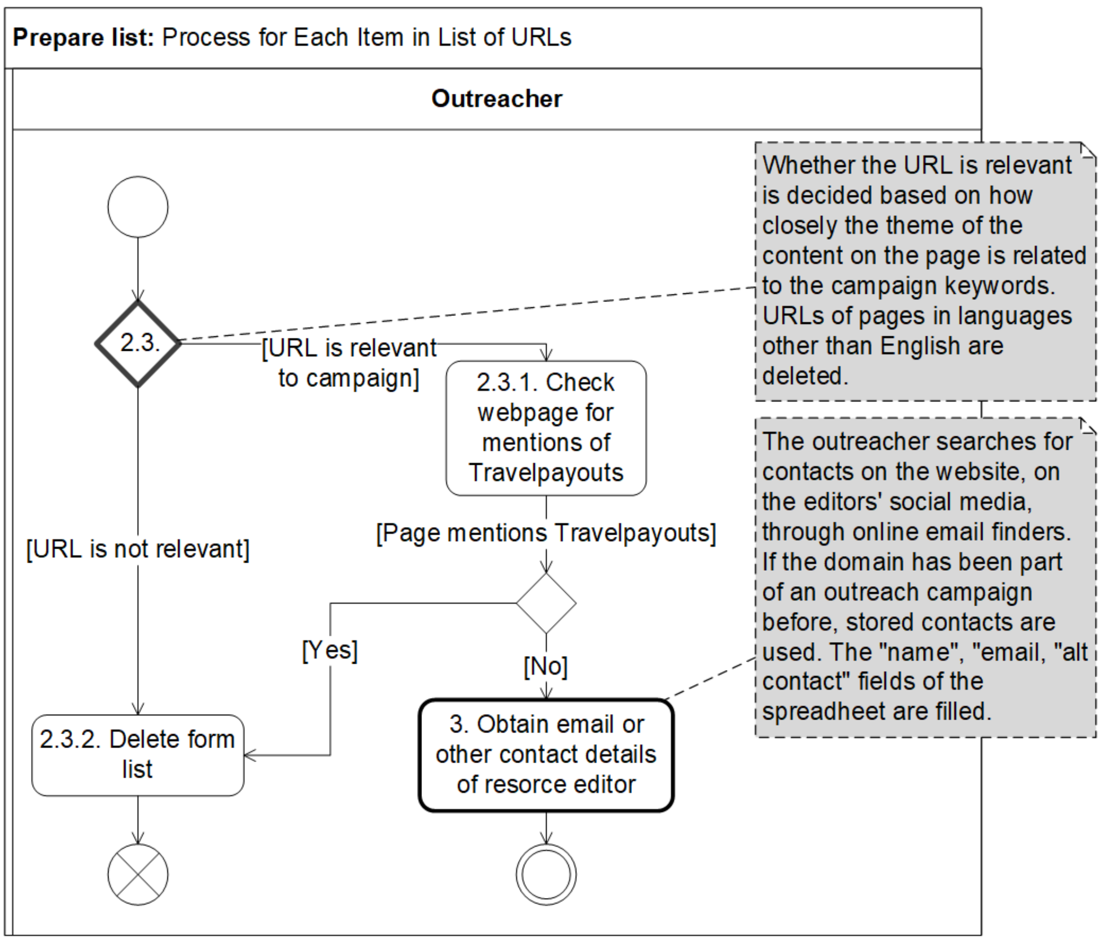
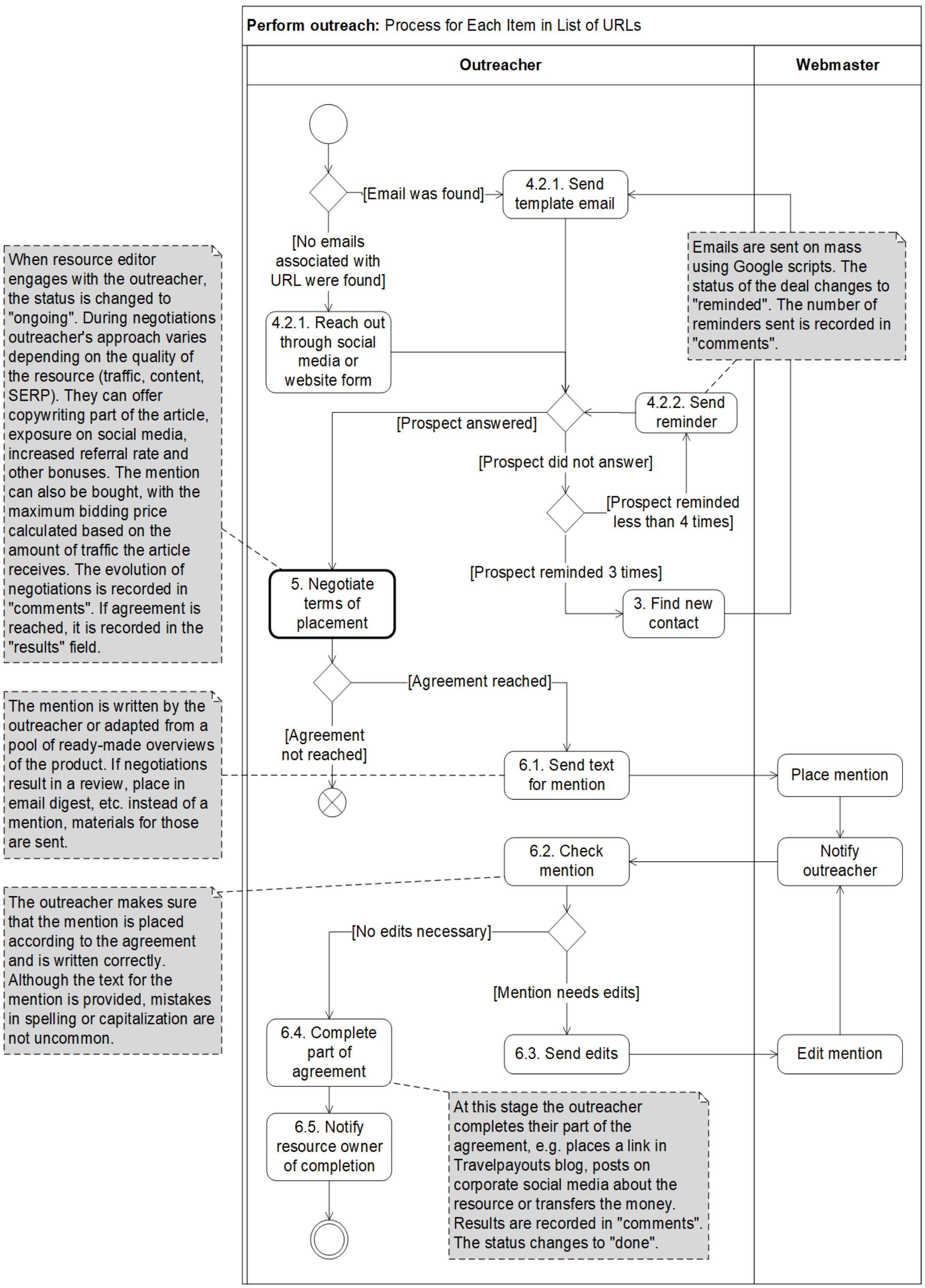


Figure 13 demonstrates the process of working with one resource during an outreach campaign. This process is the same for all resources. The work with all resources is started at the same time and then done in parallel.

Figure 13

Activity Diagram Showing the Process of Working with Each Resource During an Outreach Campaign



3.2.3 Improvement points

Analysis of the business process of outreach at Travelpayouts highlighted several tracking blindspots. Some of them arise from poor communication between teams and others from inefficient workflows and the use of outdated tools. Common solutions for removing blindspots within a business process are automation, data harmonization, formalization, and simplification of procedures.

In Figures 11, 12, and 13 activities that lack transparency have a bold outline. The exact description of the blindspots and recommendations according to analysis are provided in Table 7.

Table 7

Outreach at Travelpayouts: Diagnosis of Tracking Blindspots and Recommendations

Activity	**Reason for ambiguity**	**Recommendation**
1.2. Create list of campaign keywords	The approach to gathering campaign keywords is unclear. The SEO specialist receives a list of keywords with little additional directions.	The process of gathering campaign keywords should be formalized into a written algorithm to prevent knowledge loss (“How to select resources for outreach”). It has to include a list of ever-green keywords that the company aims to rank for (“Travelpayouts ranking keywords”). Campaign-specific keywords should be gathered based on search statistics and keyword difficulty. The SEO specialist has to receive an unambiguous task with a specified depth of parsing and parsing criteria.
2.1. Parse search engine results for keywords	The action is performed by a specialist that is not part of the Travelpayouts team. It limits supervision and increases the length of the process. Limited understanding of the context of the task also prevents the worker from	The process of gathering resources should be handled internally and, if possible, completely automated.

Activity	Reason for ambiguity	Recommendation
	using his expertise to provide the best results, ones that go beyond direct instructions.	
2.3. Decide whether page is relevant to the campaign	There are no formalized criteria for resource selecting and purging.	An algorithm should be created for resource relevancy evaluation to prevent exclusion of valuable pages and inclusion of pages where placements are not worth the outreach effort (“How to select resources for outreach”).
5. Negotiate terms of placement	The current environment, Google Sheets, does not allow storing communication history. The table also has to fill out manually, which leads to information loss. The outreacher now negotiates using vague guidelines and their own judgment.	A different environment that would allow for communication history storage should be chosen. One of the criteria for the choice of the environment should be the inevitability of recording data. An internal list of bargaining arguments should be created (“How to negotiate in outreach”). It should contain possible promotional opportunities with threshold requirements.
7.2. Measure effect	The metrics are not chosen, and their target values are not set.	A list of metrics and their target values should be created (“Assessing outreach”).

In this section, the “As-Is” process of outreach at Travelpayouts was described and analyzed. First, the methodology of analysis was determined. Second, the process, its goals, and elements were defined. Third, the process description was translated into an algorithm and visualized using an activity diagram in UML. The diagram was deemed a clear representation of the process by a third-party expert (personal communication, Mar 15, 2021). Finally, inefficiencies and blindspots were identified in the processes, and recommendations were given for addressing them. The resulting table was reviewed by a representative of Travelpayouts familiar with the process of outreach. Research Task 3 was completed in this section. The gained understanding of the current system and its flaws serves as a basis for constructing the new system, which is done further in this paper.

4. Designing the System for Conducting Outreach at Travelpayouts

The goal of this research is to compile a system of conducting outreach. The system must allow tracking, evaluating, and improving the effectiveness of the effort, so a performance measuring system must be created. In order to collect the data for measuring performance, a reliable tracking environment must also be chosen. In this section metrics for assessing the process are chosen, a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is set, a tracking environment is selected, and for the untransparent activities within the process guiding documentation is selected.

All elements of the system must be chosen in accordance with the strategic goals of the company. The following are those goals that can be achieved through outreach and through process reengineering efforts. The goals below are presented in a non-concrete form, not formulated using the SMART methodology to protect company data and interests:

- acquiring partners to maintain and grow revenue stream for Travelpayouts and brands;
- growing brand awareness in the global market;
- establishing and growing brand authority in the global market;
- optimizing the use of human resources;
- increasing transparency of operations;
- digitally documenting the processes and knowledge within the marketing team to ensure the heritability of company-produced knowledge (personal communication, March 21, 2021).

Even though performance measurement is a ubiquitous practice with many developed frameworks, there is a distinct lack of guidance on choosing and implementing performance indicators (Van Looy & Shafagatova, 2016). One reason for it is that the choice of metrics is highly dependent on the specifics of an organization's processes and goals (Norton & Kaplan, 1999). Therefore, the metrics for assessing outreach at Travelpayouts will be chosen based on the specifics of the process demonstrated in Section 3.2.2. Although the canon metrics identified in the literature review (see Table 4) will be considered, metrics developed during the empirical study will be given priority.

4.1. Choosing metrics

A metric, in a business context, is a quantitative measure that reflects the effectiveness or status of a process (KlipFolio, n.d.). In his Harvard Business Review article Michael Mauboussin states that the purpose of a metric is to “allow you to understand, track, and manage the cause-and-effect relationships that determine your company’s performance” (*The True Measures of Success, 2012, sec. “Picking Statistics”)*.

As demonstrated in Section 1.4.1, a variety of metrics is used to track outreach. Some were adapted from the field of PR, others are borrowed from SEO work. This reflects the dimensionality of outreach. It can have vastly different objectives that are achieved through the same process and means. This also highlights the importance of keeping the goals of a specific company, sometimes even a specific campaign, in mind when choosing the metrics. At the same time, the metrics have to be constant for a substantial period of time to allow for hindsight perspective and process improvement (*The True Measures of Success*, 2012).

Popular metrics were assessed using the METRIC framework developed by Sullivan et al (2004) as seen in Table 8. METRIC is an acronym that stands for:

- Measurable, meaning it can be represented by a number;
- Easy, meaning that the necessary data is readily available and the relationship between the metric and the process is clear;
- Timely, meaning that it measures that it provides feedback while the process can still be modified;

- Repeatable, meaning that necessary data can be collected and analyzed over several periods;
- Insightful, meaning that it brings to attention information on the process that was unknown;
- Controllable, meaning that its value can be changed as a result of changing the process.

The system helped to ensure that those that were adopted would be easy to measure, representative and useful. Since the initial list was gathered as a result of literature review, some metrics were not relevant to Travelpayouts' goals. Those were not considered.

Table 8

Assessment Of Popular Outreach Metrics

№	Metric	Measurable	Easy	Timely	Repeatable	Insightful	Controllable
	campaign metrics						
1	links/mentions placed	+	+	+	+	0	+
2	response rate	+	+	+	+	+	+
3	open rate	+	+	+	+	+	+
4	placement rate	+	+	+	+	+	+
5	emails sent	+	+	+	+	0	+
6	decline rate	+	+	0	+	0	0
7	cost of outreach	+	0	0	+	+	+
8	time to first placement	+	+	+	+	0	0
9	total $ value of links/mentions	0	0	0	+	+	0
	placement page metrics						
10	domain authority	+	+	+	+	+	0
11	reach	+	0	0	+	+	0
12	Impressions	+	0	0	+	+	0
13	total domain authority	+	+	+	+	0	0

№	Metric	Measurable	Easy	Timely	Repeatable	Insightful	Controllable
14	relevance	+	+	+	+	+	0
15	Alexa ranking	+	+	+	+	0	0
16	SERP position	+	+	+	+	+	0
17	traffic	+	+	+	+	+	0
	effect on home resource						
18	referral traffic	+	0	0	0	+	0
19	referral traffic behavior	0	0	0	0	+	0

Note: In the table a “+” sign in a cell means that a give metric satisfies and given criteria and a “0” means that it does not.

As a result of the assessment metrics 2, 3, and 4 were adopted to provide more transparency for activities and subprocesses that lacked it, according to analysis in Section 3.2.3. These metrics will serve to collect data to make outreach more effective. To disambiguate the choice of whether to renew a paid deal after its expiration, another metric was added — *partner acquisition cost.* All metrics, their target values and their purpose are presented in Table 9.

Metrics 10, 14, 16, and 17 are useful, but beyond the control of the outreacher, so they could not be used to assess outreach campaigns. Instead, they were chosen as criteria for selecting resources in “How to select resources guide” further explained in Section 4.2.

Table 9

Metrics For Measuring The Effectiveness Of Outreach

Metric	Target Value	Purpose	Subprocess Measured
Open rate for each template — the number of emails opened divided by the number of emails sent.	25%[a]	To measure the effectiveness of the subject line (pitch quality).	“reach”
Response rate for each template — the number of responses divided by the number of emails sent.	15%[b]	To measure the quality of the email body (pitch quality)	“reach”
Placement rate (negotiation success rate) — the number of placements divided by the number of responses.	50%[b]	To measure outreacher's productivity and negotiation skills	“negotiate”
Partner acquisition cost — number of registrations arriving from URL divided by the cost of placement, calculated yearly for paid placements.	$3 - $8, depending on the income of the gained partners[b]	To measure expediency of outreach for partner acquisition and relevancy of the resource	“select resources”, “negotiate”

Note: [a](Campaign Monitor, n.d.), [b](personal communication, April 6, 2021)

4.2. Formalizing the process

The analysis of tracking blindspots presented in Table 7 called for several artifacts to be created. The documentation serves as a guideline for conducting activities. Atlassian defines documentation as “ the practice of authoring and maintaining clearly detailed processes and procedures for reference by your internal team members” (*How to Ace Internal Documentation*, n.d., sec. *What is internal documentation*). Documentation would benefit the process of outreach in several ways:

- Reducing the cost of the process by saving the current workers time and expediting onboarding;

- Increasing consistency of results and allowing for more flexibility in execution by clarifying expectations;
- Increasing knowledge retention;
- Promote knowledge sharing in the company as a whole (Atlassian, n.d.).

To document the process of outreach a manual “How to do outreach” was created. It describes the basic principles of doing outreach, its goals within the company and general workflow. It also includes the following sections:

- “Travelpayouts ranking keywords” — a list of ever-green keywords that the company aims to rank for;
- “How to select resources for outreach” — a manual detailing the process of gathering campaign keywords, assessing resource quality and relevancy using metrics 10, 14, 16, and 17 from Table 8.
- “How to negotiate in outreach” — a list of bargaining arguments, promotional opportunities for resource owners and threshold requirements for qualifying for them.
- “Assessing outreach” — a list of metrics and their target values (see Table 9) with instructions on how to collect data.

4.3. Choosing a tracking environment

Section 1.4.2 of his paper provided an overview of different contact storage and tracking environments: spreadsheets, email clients, and software. Software solutions were clearly the most convenient and efficient. However, the market of software solutions suitable for outreach is extensive and non-homogenous: more than 2500 CRMs, PR solutions, and link-building tools.

Regular CRMs are built around achieving goals that outreach does not pursue — making sales. They are designed for sales departments and are focused on revenue tracking and prediction. Outreach works with webmasters, instead of customers. Outreachers either negotiate non-monetary exchanges or pay the webmasters, which is the opposite flow of cash.

This discrepancy means that CRMs are simply inconvenient for outreachers. In addition to this, CRMs lack the functionality of building lists of target resources, forcing outreachers to outsource the task or switch to other tools to complete it. In both cases, the company bears extra costs. For this reason, CRMs that were not specifically adapted to outreach or digital PR were not considered.

To significantly narrow down the field of software solutions considered, budget constraints were converted into elimination criteria. The software solutions have to be web-based, not hosted on premise, and they have to cost less than $50 per worker (personal communication, March 2, 2021). Budget constraints also demand that the solution does not require extensive training to be implemented and that it has an accessible support team that can help manage arising issues (personal communication, March 2, 2021). The company also strives to avoid moving from solution to solution because of the time cost of such a move, so the solution has to be actively maintained and improved (personal communication, March 2, 2021). These criteria rule out software solutions with a small user base because the team behind them might be too small to keep up with the rapid development of tracking environments. The criteria also rule out industry giants that target large corporations because of the higher cost of their services.

The metrics chosen in Section 4.1 serve as another set of elimination criteria. The chosen software solution must automatically track the open rate and response rate for each template. The metrics and budget constraints comprise the following set of qualifying criteria:

- The solution is cloud-based.
- The solution costs less than $50 per user a month.
- User support is available.
- The solution is in constant active development.
- The template open rate is calculated automatically.
- The template response rate is calculated automatically.

To arrive at one solution, comparison criteria need to be chosen. Over the period of 8 months (from July 2020 to March 2021), an empirical study was conducted. During the fieldwork, outreach was tracked in a spreadsheet (see Figures 9 and 10). It served as an evolutionary prototype, a system that was refined over time (Davis, 1992). Features (columns, automations) were added and changed as a result of user observation. Whenever the user encountered a problem or thought of a feature, it was recorded and, if possible, created. Then the user would try the new configuration in practice and note the changes needed. Lacking features that could not be realized in spreadsheets were recorded separately. That list was moderated and added to over the course of interviews with PR, marketing, and business development professionals.

The features present in the final list are beyond the basic functionality that all CRMs, PR, and link-building software solutions share. Yet, user observation demonstrated that they are necessary for conducting outreach effectively. The following features comprise the criteria for comparing software solutions that satisfy all qualifying criteria:

- deal prioritization
- pipeline automations such as conditional emails
- editable notes
- discreet email opens' tracking
- deal filtering including that by date of the last change
- bulk edit of deals, contacts, and organizations
- deal reminders
- customizable sender signature
- “undo send” feature (personal communication, March 15, 2021)

Overall, 20 solutions were considered. All of them satisfied all qualifying criteria, but only one of them possessed all functionality listed above — Respona. It is an “all-in-one digital PR, influencer marketing, and link building software that combines personalization with productivity" (*Respona: All-in-One Digital PR and Link Building Software*, 2019).

Respona's functionality encompasses everything that was done in the spreadsheets, for example storing contacts, tracking deal status. In most areas Respona outperforms spreadsheets by automating tasks. For instance, in spreadsheets communications had to be summarized and written up into the "comments" column, and Respona logs and saves the full text of interactions, as well as allows to leave extensive notes on them. Respona also poses additional functionality that celiminates certain subprocesses. The full extent to, which the environment changed the flow of the process is demonstrated in Figures 14, 15, and 16 found in Section 4.5.

4.4. Setting KPIs

Key performance indicator (KPI) — a value that reflects companies' performance in achieving business objectives (KlipFolio, n.d.). KPIs are descriptive. They measure what has happened within a specified time period and assign a value that represents the degree of success. This allows companies to track their progress and modify their strategies. KPIs can also be used to predict companies' progress towards their goals based on historical data (John Reh, n.d.; KlipFolio, n.d.).

After analyzing the process of outreach and its objectives (Section 3.2) and how they tie into the company's overall strategic goals (Section 4), the KPI was set at 10 units of exposure for 40 hours of work. To represent the work that went into placing a mention or organizing promotion and to reflect the effect from each system of units was adopted.

Units of exposure in this case are determined quantities of value. Unlike placements, units of exposure take into account the quality of the target resource: domain authority, quality, and relevance of content, search engine position for a target keyword. They reflect characteristics and results of the placement or promotional activity and can be summed (see

Table 10). For example, a placement on a web page that has content interesting for the target audience (relevant for a target keyword), is displayed on the first page of the search results, and receives more than 100 unique visitors per month will be valued at 1.5 units.

Table 10

Examples of Unit Measurements for Different Types of Exposure

Exposure characteristic	Value of exposure, units
Placement URL content is relevant for a target keyword.	0.5
The placement URL is on the first page of the search results for a target keyword.	0.5
Placement URL has more than 100 unique visitors a month from organic search.	0.5
The email campaign containing placement had a reach of more than 1500 (opened emails).	1
A promotion containing placement (any form other than email) had a reach of at least 3000 people (impressions).	1

The KPI was set at 10 units of exposure for 40 hours of work. The target number of units was reached based on the data of the work done in the previous 8 months and its results, which were converted into units according to the system exemplified in Table 10.

Table 11

Outreach Results in Units for 60 Hours a Month

Month	Units
August	8.5
September	5
October	5.5
November	10
December	14
January	3
February	9
March	6
Average result	**7.6**

Another basis for the KPI is the results achieved in April and May 2021, after the partial implementation of the system (see Table 12). Although it must be noted, the results for both months are hardly representative. April saw a lot of carry-over agreements from previous months. The May results were recalculated from 5 units of exposure in 20 hours of work.

Table 12

Outreach Results In Units For 40 Hours A Month

Historical average recalculated	**5**
April	10
May	10

Overall the KPI of 10 units of exposure a month with a distributed 40-hour workload is an ambitious bar. The metric demonstrates a 50% cut in the overall cost of performing outreach. It sets a high standard for both the quality of media and the quantity of exposure, which reflects the company's strategic goals.

4.5. Results

The system for conducting outreach was developed: metrics were chosen, KPI set, environment selected, the process documented. If fully adopted the system would significantly simplify the process of outreach (see Figures 14, 15, and 16). For example, subprocess "find contacts" is no done without leaving the work software and the contacts are found automatically.

Figure 14

Activity Diagram of the Process of Outreach "To-Be"

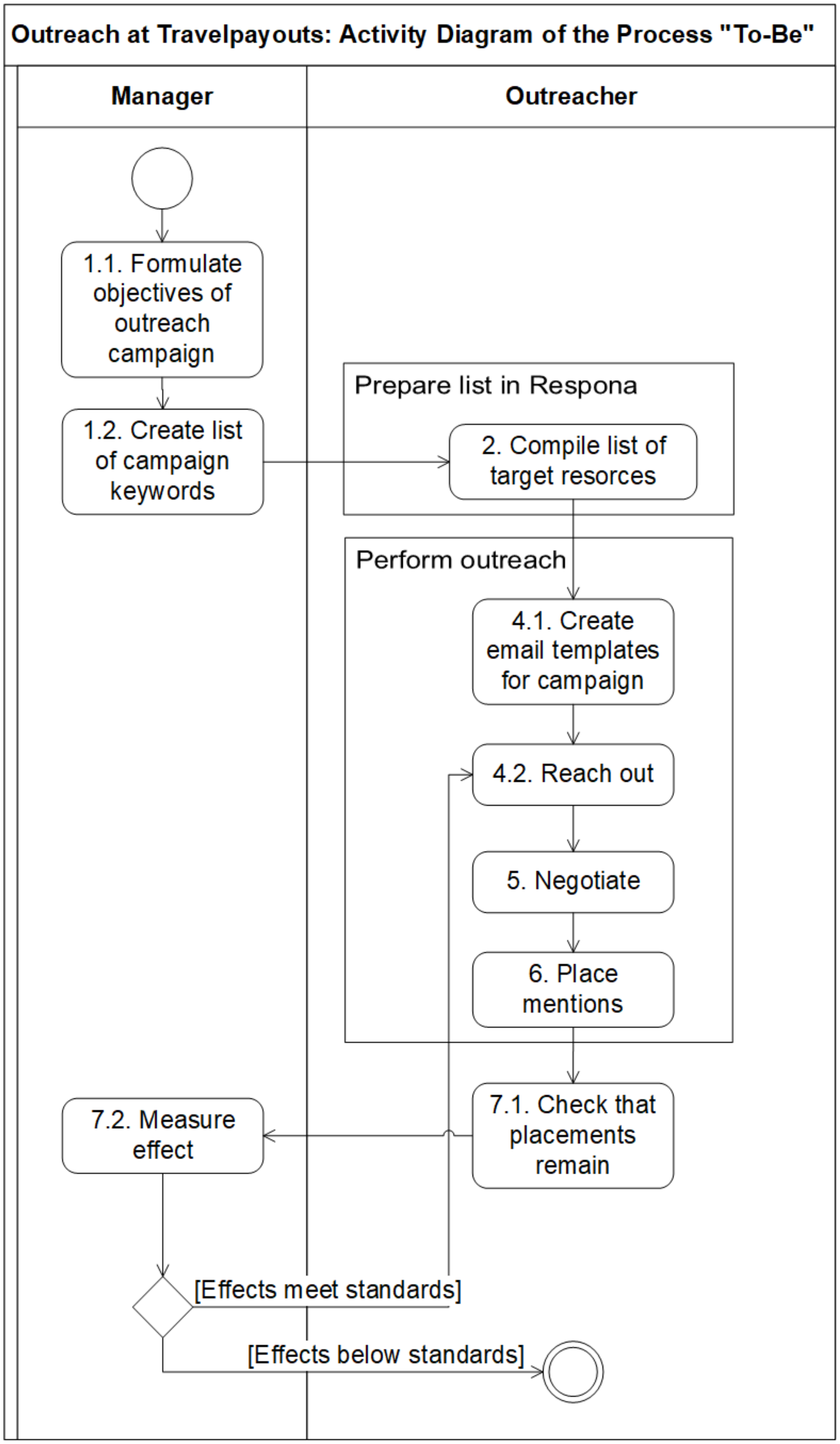


Figure 15

Activity Diagram Showing URL List Preparation

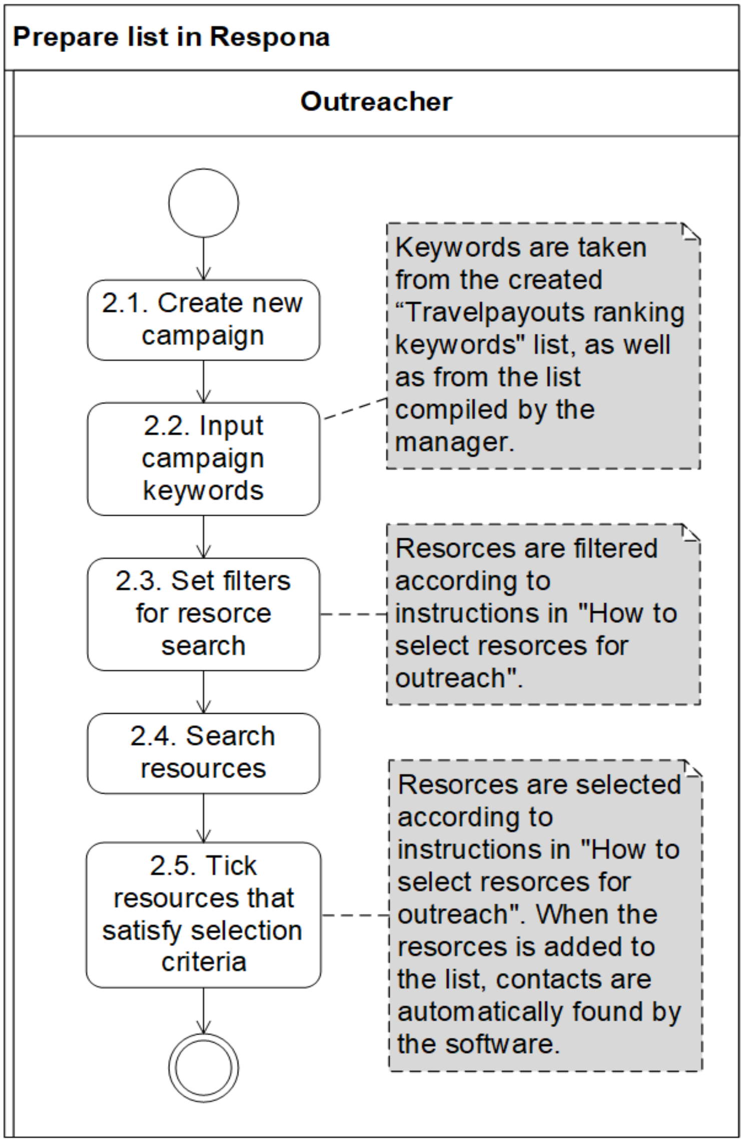
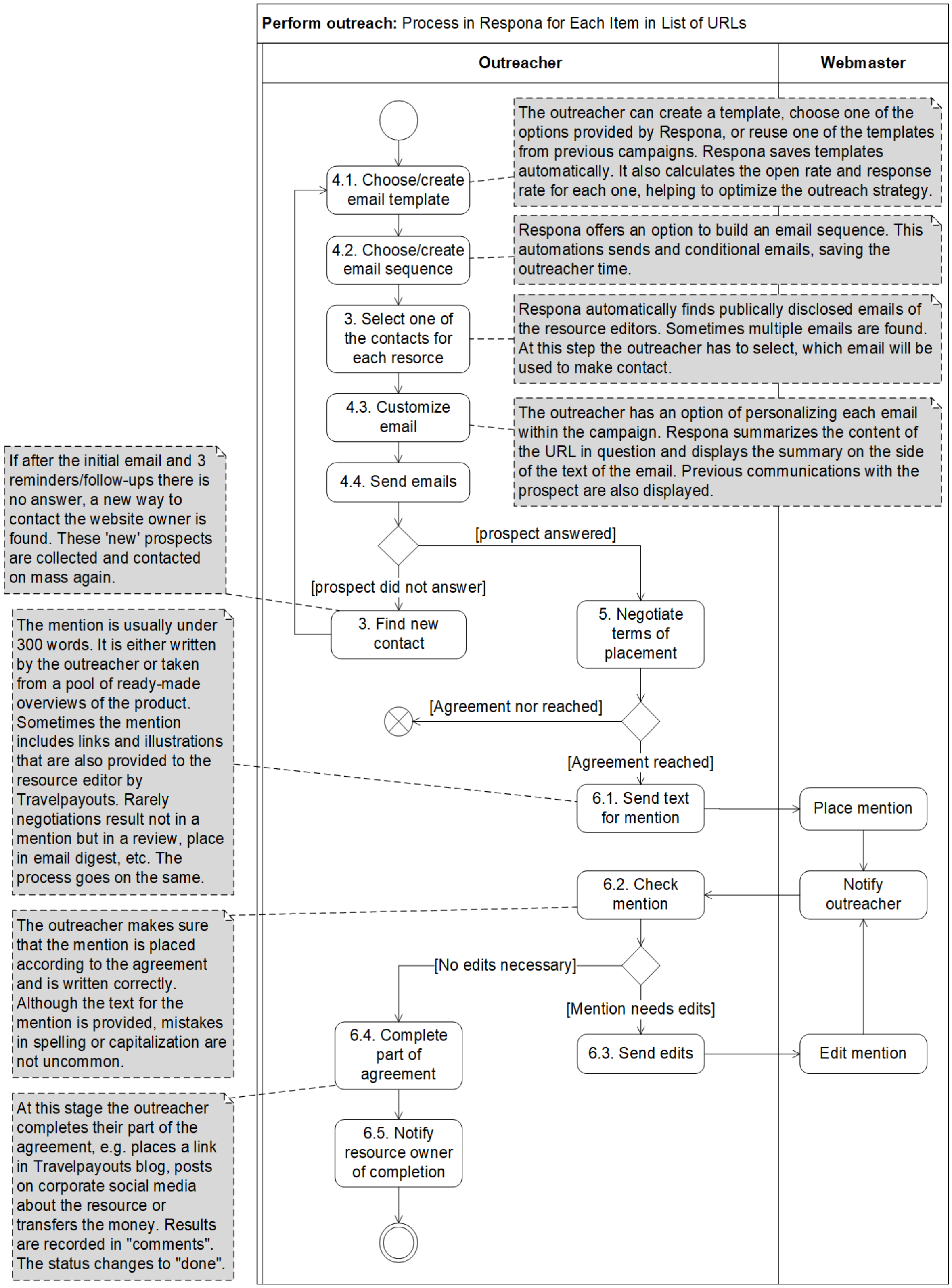


Figure 16

Activity Diagram Showing the Work with Each Resource in an Outreach Campaign



To prove that the new system accomplishes the set goal — allows tracking, evaluating, and improving outreach at Travelpayouts — activities that were identified as tracking blindspots before a reexamined in Table 13. Recommendations are reprinted for context from Table 7.

Table 13

Results of the Elimination of Tracking Blindspots

Tracking blindspot	Recommendation	Results
1.2. Create list of campaign keywords	The process of gathering campaign keywords should be formalized into a written algorithm to prevent knowledge loss (“How to select resources for outreach”). It has to include a list of ever-green keywords that the company aims to rank for (“Travelpayouts ranking keywords”). Campaign-specific keywords should be gathered based on search statistics and keyword difficulty. The SEO specialist has to receive an unambiguous task with a specified depth of parsing and parsing criteria.	“Travelpayouts ranking keywords” list was created. The process of selecting campaign keywords was recorded in “How to select resources for outreach”.
2.1. Parse search engine results for keywords	The process of gathering resources should be handled internally and, if possible, completely automated.	The chosen environment offers a simple way of compiling the list of target resources, making the involvement of the SEO specialist unnecessary.
2.3. Decide whether page is relevant to the campaign	An algorithm should be created for resource relevancy evaluation to prevent exclusion of valuable pages and inclusion of pages where placements are not worth the outreach effort (“How to select resources for outreach”).	“How to select resources for outreach” was created to provide guidance on choosing resources. The new way of compiling the resource list also excludes the irrelevant and low-quality resources at the stage of setting filters (activity 2.3.).
5. Negotiate terms of placement	A different environment that would allow for communication history storage should be chosen. One of the criteria for the choice of the	The created “How to negotiate in outreach” guide details negotiation algorithm.

Tracking blindspot	Recommendation	Results
	environment should be the inevitability of recording data. An internal list of bargaining arguments should be created ("How to negotiate in outreach"). It should contain possible promotional opportunities with threshold requirements.	The chosen environment automatically saves the history of communication and provides easy access to it.
7.2. Measure effect	A list of metrics and their target values should be created ("Assessing outreach").	Metrics were chosen and target values were set (see Table 8 and Section 4.4). "Assessing outreach" covered the application of those metrics.

In addition to solving the problems discovered during the analysis, the new system (even partially implemented) significantly improved the results of outreach. As described in Section 4.4. the overall cost of the process saw a 50% reduction. It is also reasonable to assume that the quality of outreach improved, and the effects will be evident that the next partner acquisition assessment mark.

In this section of the paper outlined the components of the system "To-be" and explained their necessity. The metrics for assessing the effectiveness of outreach and the environment for tracking were chosen. Both were approved by the Travelpayouts experts. It is also proven the designed system solves the managerial challenges that Travelpayouts experienced before in outreach. The process "To-Be" is documented in subsection 4.5, and is deemed as clear by third party experts. Research Tasks 4 and 5 are completed in this section.

Conclusion

This research was devoted to designing a system for conducting outreach at Travelpayouts. Outreach is a poorly documented area of business, with little academic coverage and disjointed internet coverage of questionable quality. Therefore, one of the tasks set and achieved by this paper was to define outreach, provide an overview of the managerial challenges associated with this field, and review the common practices of tracking and evaluating the effectiveness of outreach efforts (see Section 1). This constituted the theoretical value of the research, while also providing a basis for the practical part – compiling the system.

Section 2 of this paper examined the business context of the process that was to be redesigned. Travelpayouts structure, business model, and goals were outlined. Section 2.2 provided a brief overview of the evolution of approaches to outreach and its objectives, which helped to understand the process “As-Is”.

The process was mapped using SIPOC and UML activity diagrams in Section 3. Bottlenecks and tracking blindspots were diagnosed and described. Recommendations for their rectification served as guidelines for system design and as benchmarks against which the system was judged.

Section 4 focused on the development of the new system. Metrics of outreach effectiveness and efficiency were chosen from the literature review conducted in Section 1.4.1 and adapted from the empirical study. The empirical study also helped determine the criteria for choosing the software environment. The results of expert interviews and conclusions from prototyping also contributed to list of criteria. PR and link-building tool, Respona, was chosen as the new process environment. And the new flow of outreach was mapped using UML activity diagrams. Supporting documentation was created that helped disambiguate problematic parts of the process.

The goal of this paper - to compile a system of conducting outreach that would allow tracking, evaluating, and improving its effectiveness – was achieved. The resulting system aligned with company goals, eliminated bottlenecks and tracking blindspots, and was approved by company representatives. After it was partially implemented the cost of the process decreased by 50%, which was reflected in the newly set KPI value.

References

7 metrics for measuring PR success. (2017, December 5). GSPM GWU. https://gspm.online.gwu.edu/blog/7-metrics-for-measuring-pr-success/

7 Powerful KPIs to Measure your Link Building Outreach. (n.d.). Retrieved March 29, 2021, from https://www.optimizesmart.com/7-powerful-kpis-measure-link-building-outreach/

13th International Conference on Intellectual Capital Knowledge Management & Organisational Learning: ICICKM 2016. (n.d.). Academic Conferences and publishing limited.

60+ SEO statistics to help you rank #1 in 2021. (2019, February 5). SEO Tribunal. https://seotribunal.com/blog/stats-to-understand-seo/

Passive vs. Active methods for driving web traffic. Retrieved May 31, 2021, from http://www.stevescottsite.com/passive-vs-active-methods-for-driving-web-traffic

Amiti, M., & Wei, S.-J. (2014). Fear of service outsourcing: is it justified? *Economic Policy*, *20*(42), 308–347.

Askew, T. (2015, September 14). *8 reasons to avoid outsourcing overseas*. Inc. https://www.inc.com/tim-askew/8-reasons-not-to-offshore-for-your-business.html

Beadell, S. (2014, March 4). *How to measure outreach campaign success through meta-analysis*. Buzzstream. https://www.buzzstream.com/blog/how-to-measure-outreach.html

Bennett. (2004). *Object-Oriented Systems Analysis And Design Using Uml*. Tata McGraw-Hill Education.

Carlisle, A. (n.d.). *How to set up metrics to optimize your digital PR team's press coverage*. Moz. Retrieved March 29, 2021, from https://moz.com/blog/optimize-digital-press-coverage

Chaffey, D., & Smith, P. (2017). *Digital Marketing Excellence: Planning, Optimizing and Integrating Online Marketing*. Taylor & Francis.

Comcowich, W. (2018, September 28). *5 Essential PR Metrics to Measure Earned Media*. Glean. https://glean.info/5-essential-pr-metrics-measure-earned-media/?doing_wp_cron=1621680734.3530859947204589843750

CRM vs. BRM vs. PRM? What Should You Get? (n.d.). Retrieved May 31, 2021, from https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/crm-vs-brm-prm-what-should-you-get-frie-p%C3%A9tr%C3%A9?trk=related_artice_CRM

Davis, A. (1992). Operational prototyping: a new development approach. *IEEE Software*, *9*(5), 70–78.

Digital PR metrics to track to show your value. (2018, November 5). https://theworkcrowd.com/blog/digital-pr-metrics-you-should-measure-to-determine-roi

Do you know these 6 business process analysis steps? (2015, October 15). *Heflo*. https://www.heflo.com/blog/process-mapping/business-process-analysis-methodology/

Dudharejia, M. (2018, April 11). *Link metrics 101: Guide to an effective link building strategy*. https://www.e2msolutions.com/blog/measure-link-metrics-link-building-strategy/

Edwards, K. (2021, March 24). *PR metrics: 6 ways to measure your brand's success*. https://www.mediatoolkit.com/blog/pr-metrics-ways-to-measure-your-brands-success/

Elmuti, D., Grunewald, J., & Abebe, D. (2010). Consequences of outsourcing strategies on employee quality of work life, attitudes, and performance. *Journal of Business Strategies*, *27*(2), 177.

George, G., & Bock, A. J. (2011). The Business Model in Practice and its Implications for Entrepreneurship Research. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *35*(1), 83–111.

Global media intelligence and PR software market (2020 to 2024). (2020, April 3). Business Wire. https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200403005417/en/Global-Media-Intelligence-and-PR-Software-Market-2020-to-2024---Size-Trends-Forecasts---ResearchAndMarkets.com

Global Public Relations Market. (n.d.). Retrieved May 31, 2021, from https://www.thebusinessresearchcompany.com/report/public-relations-global-market-report

Hammer, M., & Champy, J. (2001). *Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business*

Revolution. Nicholas Brealey.

Harte, T. (2021, April 6). *Digital PR metrics you should track*. https://www.digitalthirdcoast.com/blog/digital-pr-metrics

How to ace internal documentation. (n.d.). Atlassian. Retrieved May 3, 2021, from https://www.atlassian.com/work-management/documentation

How to measure PR: The definitive guide. (n.d.). Buzzsumo. Retrieved March 29, 2021, from https://buzzsumo.com/blog/how-to-measure-pr-definitive-guide/

How to measure the results of a PR campaign? (2021, March 18). Brand24. https://brand24.com/blog/measure-pr-campaign/

Importance of Documentation. (n.d.). Atlassian. Retrieved May 3, 2021, from https://www.atlassian.com/work-management/documentation/importance-of-documentation

John Reh, F. (n.d.). *How Key Performance Indicators Work*. Retrieved May 29, 2021, from https://www.thebalancecareers.com/key-performance-indicators-2275156

Link building tool: Earn backlinks from authority domains. (n.d.). SEMrush. Retrieved May 31, 2021, from https://www.semrush.com/link_building/

Manic, M. (2015). The Rise of Native Advertising. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov. Economic Sciences. Series V*, *8*(1), 53.

Marketer, E. (2019, November 18). *SEO automation: Speeding up menial & tedious tasks*. https://www.einsteinmarketer.com/seo-automation/

Market Guide for Partner Relationship Management Applications. (n.d.). Impartner. Retrieved May 2, 2021, from https://www.gartner.com/technology/media-products/newsletters/impartner/1-34MYI19/gartner.html

Maximising the Role of Outreach in Client Engagement. (2013a, April 20). https://archive.md/20130420105257/http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pubs/summary.php?id=dwp326

Maximising the Role of Outreach in Client Engagement. (2013b, April 20). IES.

https://archive.md/20130420105257/http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pubs/summary.php?id=dwp326

Mili, H., Tremblay, G., Jaoude, G. B., Lefebvre, É., Elabed, L., & Boussaidi, G. E. (2010). Business process modeling languages: Sorting through the alphabet soup. *ACM Comput. Surv.*, *43*(1), 1–56.

Norton, D. P., & Kaplan, R. (1999). *The Balanced Scorecard: translating strategy into action*. Institute for International Research London, UK.

ODonoghue, D. (2020, February 24). *8 metrics that PR professionals must track to prove success*. Prowly. https://prowly.com/magazine/8-metrics-that-pr-professionals-must-track-to-prove-success/

Osterwalder, A. (2004). *The business model ontology a proposition in a design science approach* [Université de Lausanne, Faculté des hautes études commerciales]. https://www.academia.edu/download/30373644/thebusinessmodelontology.pdf

Pang, A. (2020, November 4). *Top 10 CRM software vendors, market size and market forecast 2019-2024*. https://www.appsruntheworld.com/top-10-crm-software-vendors-and-market-forecast/

Quality Glossary of Terms, Acronyms & Definitions. (n.d.). American Society of Quality. Retrieved May 24, 2021, from https://asq.org/quality-resources/quality-glossary/

Respona: All-in-one digital PR and link building software. (2019, June 28). Respona. https://respona.com/

Results of the Global PR Survey 2020. (2020, April 30). Prezly. https://www.prezly.com/contact-management-report-2020

Rosenfeld, D. (2019, July 16). *Four earned media KPIs to track*. https://www.criticalmention.com/blog/public-relations/four-earned-media-kpi-to-track/

Salesforce 2021 revenue and market share statistics. (2021, March 31). Backlinko. https://backlinko.com/salesforce-stats

Sharma, G. (2018, November 16). *How Brand Mentions Can Influence Your SEO Ranking*. Nimble. https://www.nimble.com/blog/seo-optimization-brand-mentions/

SIPOC (suppliers, inputs, process, outputs, customers) diagram. (2016, May 6). American Society of Quality: Service Quality Division. https://asqservicequality.org/glossary/sipoc-suppliers-inputs-process-outputs-customers-diagram/

Step-by-step guide to Business Process Mapping. (2017, October 25). *Tallyfy*. https://tallyfy.com/business-process-mapping/

Sullivan, M. J., McDaniel, M. F., & Siegel, R. D. (2004). Using metrics to track progress of community outreach programs. *Chemical Engineering Progress*, *100*(12), 34–38.

The only earned media strategy you'll ever need. (2019, September 25). Sprout Social. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/earned-media-strategy/

The Seven Steps of Business Process Analysis. (2017, September 12). *Business Enterprise Mapping*. https://www.businessmapping.com/blog/seven-steps-business-process-analysis/

The True Measures of Success. (2012, October 1). *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2012/10/the-true-measures-of-success

Thompson, H. (2019, March 28). *5 KPIs for Measuring Off-Page SEO and Link Building Efforts*. Portent. https://www.portent.com/blog/seo/kpis-for-measuring-outreach-and-link-building-efforts.htm

Threlkeld, B. (2019, February 16). 5 Essential Digital PR Metrics. *Medium*. https://medium.com/@billthrelkeld/5-essential-digital-pr-metrics-1dabb9567eaa

Public Relations (PR) Tools Market with COVID-19 impact. (2021, February 18). The Courier. https://www.mccourier.com/public-relations-pr-tools-market-with-covid-19-impact-analysis-top-companies-agility-pr-solutions-brand24-global-inc-cision-ltd-market-growth-sales-trends-service-forecast-to-2027/

Top 100 Link Building Services. (n.d.). Retrieved April 1, 2021, from https://themanifest.com/seo/link-building/agencies

Totah, Z. (2020, December 14). *B2B vs B2C CRM*. Select Hub. https://www.selecthub.com/customer-relationship-management/b2b-vs-b2c-crm/

Types of companies in Hong Kong. (n.d.). Retrieved June 2, 2021, from https://www.lawfirmhongkong.com/types-of-companies-in-hong-kong

UML - Activity Diagrams. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2021, from https://www.tutorialspoint.com/uml/uml_activity_diagram

Van Looy, A., & Shafagatova, A. (2016). Business process performance measurement: a structured literature review of indicators, measures and metrics. *SpringerPlus*, *5*(1), 1797.

Walter, T. (2021, February 17). *PR metrics: How your firm can measure PR results in 2021 – Bluetext*. https://www.bluetext.com/pr-metrics-2021/

What are good conversion metrics for cold emails? (n.d.). Campaign Monitor. Retrieved May 29, 2021, from https://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources/knowledge-base/what-are-good-conversion-metrics-for-cold-emails/

What is a KPI, Metric or Measure? (n.d.). KlipFolio. Retrieved May 29, 2021, from https://www.klipfolio.com/blog/kpi-metric-measure

What is CRM? (n.d.). Microsoft. Retrieved May 31, 2021, from https://dynamics.microsoft.com/en-us/crm/what-is-crm/

What is digital PR and why is it important? (n.d.). Talk Walker. Retrieved March 29, 2021, from https://www.talkwalker.com/blog/what-is-digital-pr

What is Outreach Marketing? (2020, July 20). Respona. https://respona.com/blog/outreach-marketing/

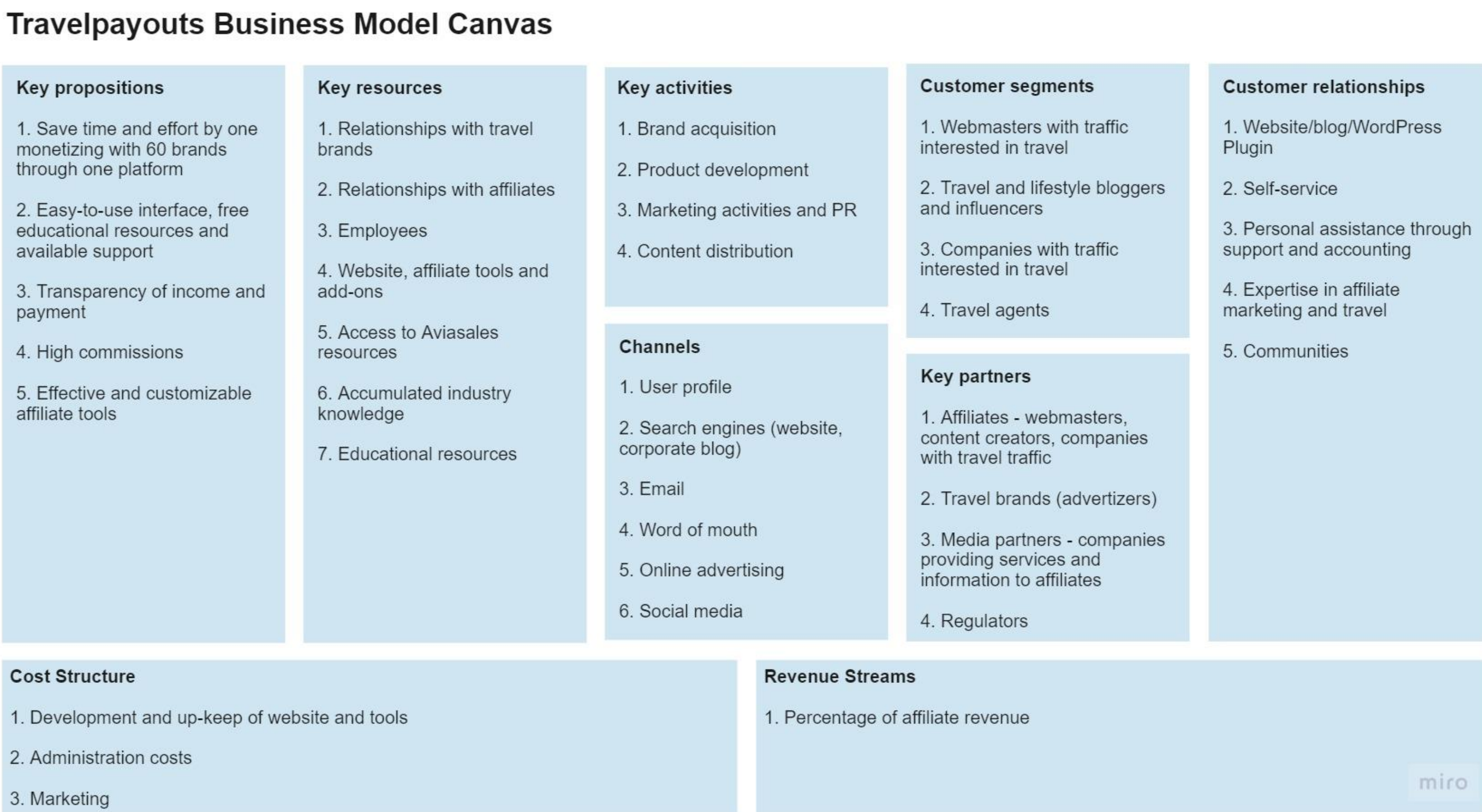
Why and What Do Companies Outsource? (2017, March 31). Intetics. https://intetics.com/white-papers/why-and-what-do-companies-outsource

Zhang, S., & Cabage, N. (2017). Search Engine Optimization: Comparison of Link Building and Social Sharing. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, *57*(2), 148–159.

Figures

Figure 17

Travelpayouts Business Model Canvas



Appendices

Appendix A

Recommendation Letter from Travelpayouts

Go Travel Un Limited

Рекомендательное письмо

Карпенко Юлия Александровна, студентка 4ого курса программы бакалавриата ВШМ СПбГУ «Информационный менеджмент», выполняла проект по созданию системы учета и оценки эффективности аутрича для Travelpayouts, подразделения «Go Travel Un Limited», в рамках дипломной работы.

В рамках проекта Юлия Александровна продемонстрировала знания и умения в области анализа бизнес моделей, анализа и улучшения бизнес процессов. Это позволило ей успешно решить бизнес задачу и поставленные задачи исследования. Результаты ее работы уже частично внедрены в деятельность Travelpayouts (выбранные метрики и составленная документация).

В результате проведенной работы эффективность аутрича выросла в два раза по сравнению со значениями на сентябрь 2020. Результаты работы станут основой дальнейшего развития направления аутрича в компании.

HR менеджер
Go Travel Un Limited
Метс К.К.

FOR AND BEHALF OF
GO TRAVEL UN LIMITED

Kristina Mets, HR Manager
m: +79112507510 | e: km@aviasales.ru

Go Travel Un Limited
St 1504, Chinachem Tower, 34-37 Connaught Road Central, Hong Kong
p: +852 8191 7159
w: jetradar.com / aviasales.ru