



## Social Media Strategies in Can Tho (Vietnam) Tourism: A Current Assessment and Proposed Solutions

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### Abstract

Can Tho (Vietnam), the vibrant heart of the Mekong Delta, embraces the region's unique tourism allure, offering a captivating blend of eco-tourism, river-based adventures amidst traditional craft villages, cultural immersion, and serene resorts. With a plethora of enticing destinations, Can Tho has captivated a vast array of travelers, playing a pivotal role in the economic and social development of the locality and the wider region. To further enhance its appeal, Can Tho has recognized the immense significance of effective communication and tourism marketing strategies on social networking platforms, alongside maintaining exceptional service quality. This article delves into the current landscape of Can Tho tourism communication and marketing on Facebook and TikTok. Through a comprehensive analysis of these two influential platforms and a survey gathering insights from diverse perspectives, we will uncover the role of social media communication in driving Can Tho's tourism growth. Ultimately, this study will propose actionable solutions to refine and optimize Can Tho's tourism communication strategies on these social networking platforms, paving the way for an even more successful future.

### Keywords

Mekong Delta, Can Tho's tourism, Social media

### 1. INTRODUCTION

According to statistical results published in early 2023 from We Are Social [1], the world currently has 5.44 billion mobile phone users (accounting for 68% of the global population), an increase of more than 3% over the year 2022. Moreover, there are about 5.16 billion internet users worldwide (accounting for 64.4% of the world population), an increase of 1.9% in the past 12 months. There are 4.88 billion social network users worldwide (July 2023), equivalent to 60.6% of the global population. According to data from GWI [2], social network users spend an average of 2 hours and 26 minutes daily using social networks.

Vietnam is a relatively populous country, with nearly 99 million people at the beginning of 2023, an Internet usage rate of 77.9 million users, and about 70 million social network users (equivalent to 71% of the total population). *Number*). However, up to 89.8% of all internet users in Vietnam (regardless of age) have used at least one social networking platform. Facebook is one of the social networking platforms with the most significant number of users globally (2.99 billion users) [3] and the most popular in Vietnam recently (75.6 million active users). *Dynamic*). Recently, the birth and rise of TikTok have been no less competitive than Facebook in the Vietnamese market; TikTok has about 49.86 [4] million users aged 18 and over.

The public in Vietnam mostly likes to use social networks and views social networks as one of the essential communication channels to access information. Social networking platforms like Facebook and TikTok are valuable tools for tourism agencies and organizations to market and promote Can Tho tourism images and products to domestic and

foreign tourists [5]. Water is essential. Therefore, we will survey and analyze the promotion of Can Tho tourism products on these two platforms. Specifically, we only survey fan pages for the Facebook platform, while for the TikTok platform, we will analyze clips on individual accounts according to random survey subjects. Researching and analyzing the practice of promoting Can Tho tourism products on social networking platforms like Facebook and TikTok must be done to propose solutions for activity management models. Communication on social networking platforms is increasingly influential in promoting tourism on social networks.

We will survey two pages [6, 7] with high interactions (pages in the representative group of local state management agencies and tourism business establishments) and two TikTok accounts of these units over time. The survey period is six months, from January 1, 2023, to July 30, 2023, to analyze the communication effectiveness of these accounts based on the criteria of information quality, form of expression, and interaction.

## **2. CONTENT**

### **2.1 Introduction to the social networking platform that conducts the survey**

#### **2.1.1 Facebook social networking platform**

Facebook, the social networking platform, was founded by Mark Zuckerberg in February 2004 in the United States with the original name "TheFacebook.com." After that, Facebook quickly attracted many users and became increasingly popular, especially in Vietnam. In October 2007, Facebook had about 50 million users. The social networking platform Facebook is considered a virtual account in cyberspace. However, it reflects outside life in the "most authentic" way and allows people to connect without being limited by space or geographical distance. Convenience, friendliness, closeness to users, and easy connection between users - by April 2008, Facebook had reached about 100 million members in 21 languages. By 2012, the number of users had reached nearly 1 billion. After 19 years of operation (2004–2023), Facebook has nearly 3 billion users globally. Current platform products of the Facebook API include AI (artificial intelligence), AR (virtual reality), business tools, Messenger, Instagram, etc.

Facebook is not only a tool for collecting news but also for disseminating news and marketing products. On the other hand, Facebook's impact lies in its potential to reshape information flows and cultural interactions. And commerce between social media and between "manufacturers, suppliers, and recipients" of news by pages just like other "normal" public personal pages, not digital content creators or public figures... The page is also a place to exchange, connect, and share information between users. Fanpage will not limit comments, likes, etc., interaction when the account owner does not set a mode to limit user interaction. Facebook's page has several features, such as an unlimited number of accounts liking the page, and user accounts can like and comment on what the page posts, with high virality through the support of social activities. Ads pages can statistically analyze followers, likes, interactions, and areas of interest.

#### **2.1.2 Tiktok social network platform**

In 2019, TikTok was active in more than 150 markets in 39 languages. Although TikTok is a "junior" social network born after YouTube and Facebook in China, its development speed is considered the fastest. Because TikTok spent money on advertising campaigns on the Facebook and Snapchat platforms... In 2019, TikTok encountered many turbulences in India when the Indian Supreme Court banned it. The ban allegedly "exposes minors to explicit content and even increases their vulnerability to sexual predators." However, the ban was revoked after TikTok adjusted and removed inappropriate content.

In Vietnam (January 2021), TikTok occupies sixth place (47.6%) after Youtube, Facebook, Zalo, Facebook Messenger, and Instagram in the number of monthly users. ByteDance data shows that Vietnam has about 50.6 million users over 18 years old (TikTok's advertising reached 68.9% of all adults aged 18 and over in Vietnam in early 2023). Meanwhile, regardless of age, TikTok's advertising reach in Vietnam is equivalent to 64.0% of the local internet user base at the beginning of the year, with 49.7% of people viewing TikTok's ads in Vietnam. In Vietnam, it is female, while it is 50.3% male. However, the advertising audience often only accounts for a small number of social networking platform users because of these changes in their reach. Advertising usage may not necessarily align with the platform's overall user metrics.

TikTok first appeared in China in 2016, founded by former engineer Truong Nhat Minh of software technology firm Microsoft.

The social networking platform TikTok allows users to post various content by creating short videos (maximum 60 seconds) before August 2021. However, in mid-August 2021, Tiktok was improved, allowing users to upload clips up to 10 minutes in length. Users can insert their favorite background music and edit image filters to share on TikTok. Besides, users can live stream or record video clips to lip-sync, duet, and insert ticker effects into clips; users can store those clips in drafts or download those video clips to storage. In mobile devices, laptops...

The social networking platform TikTok also allows users to set their accounts to private or public according to their preferences. Users can interact with each other through comments, messaging, etc... TikTok users are also allowed to report accounts with spam and inappropriate content. At the same time, the "for you" section (if you are over 16 years old, there is this section) on the TikTok platform is a source of data that recommends videos for users based on their activities on the app. Content suggested to people by TikTok is created by algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI).

TikTok relies on the type of content users frequently access, search for, like, etc., to recommend suitable content. Users of this social network can also choose to "not be interested" in content genres they do not like. On the social

network Tiktok, users can also send each other videos, messages, or emoticons directly. If a TikTok social network user over 18 has at least 1,000 followers, he or she will become a “direct influencer.” Followers of “famous” users on TikTok can send virtual currency “gifts” in TikTok to each other; these “gifts” can be exchanged for real money. The value of 100 coins in TikTok corresponds to \$0.99. “Celebrities” can receive 50% of the donated money; the remaining 50% will be transferred to the TikTok application provider. However, currently, this feature is not available in our country.

TikTok is a Chinese music and short video clip social networking platform with a rapid growth rate of members globally and in Vietnam. Many videos posted on TikTok have millions of views and thousands of comments. Therefore, TikTok gradually becomes a “lucrative” market for the advertising and marketing activities of organizations, businesses, and individuals who want to reach the public and their customers but also encounter many big competitors. Currently, TikTok’s primary source of revenue comes from product brand advertising activities for businesses, with the average price per impression on TikTok in China being 01 CNY (about 3,600 VND).

## 2.2 Current status of communication about Cần Thơ Tourism on social networking platforms today

### 2.2.1 Current status of communication about Cần Thơ Tourism on fan pages

When we conducted this survey in July 2023 by searching for the keyword “Cần Thơ Tourism” on the search bar of the Facebook platform, the results appeared on many pages. Specifically, we searched for “Cần Thơ Tourism” on Facebook’s search bar, and 47 fan pages appeared, of which three had green ticks (tourist destinations introduced 02 pages). Moreover, one personal page), 13 self-introducing fan pages specializing in selling airline tickets and tours for tourists, one fan page for the Tourism department of a college, one fan page for a College of Tourism, and the remaining pages are other pages. Forums, communities, individuals, and organizations that operate, consult, and provide information for personal or organizational purposes.

Next, we selected 02 fan pages with relatively high likes and following to survey, including the page of Mỹ Khánh Tourist Village – Cần Thơ [8]. However, there is no information authentication stamp; there is a contact address, a clear email, a phone number, and a link to the tourist destination’s website, and it has 122,000 followers. The Cần Thơ Tourism fan page - Cần Thơ Tourism [8] currently has 33,000 followers. Although this page has yet to be verified by Facebook (no green tick yet), the owner introduces the address as being at the Tourism Development Center of Cần Thơ City. Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism, publicizing the landline phone number, email ending with .gov.vn (domain name only granted to state management agencies) of Cần Thơ City, and the link to the website of this department.

**Table 1** The statistics table shows the number of likes and follows of interaction on pages.

Fanpage name	Likes and followers page
Mỹ Khánh Tourism Village - Cần Thơ	115.000/122.000
Cần Thơ Tourism	31.000/33.000

The results of the survey of fan pages are as follows:

**Table 2** The statistics table shows the number of likes of interactions on posts

Fanpage name	Posts			Likes		
	Total	Text articles	Clips	Total	Text articles	Clips
Mỹ Khánh Tourism Village - Cần Thơ	385	247	138	74061	66.632	7429
	100%	64,2%	35, 8%	100%	90,0%	10%
Cần Thơ Tourism	137	129	8	4569	4465	104
	100%	94,1%	5,9%	100%	97,7%	2,3%

**Table 3** The statistics table shows the number of comments and shares of interaction on posts

Fanpage name	Comments			Shares		
	Total	Text articles	Clips	Total	Text articles	Clips
Mỹ Khánh Tourism Village - Cần Thơ	12670	11731	939	4340	4010	330
	100%	92.6%	7.4%	100%	92,4%	7,6%
Cần Thơ Tourism	319	312	7	456	452	4
	100%	97,8%	2,2%	100	99,1%	0,9%

From the statistical table of fan pages on the number of likes, followers, posts, comments, and public interactions with the fan pages, we provide comments, analysis, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the fan pages. The quality results of the pages are as follows:

First, the information content posted by fan pages has different scopes. Fanpages often focus on sharing content, information about tour prices, air tickets, fun activities, dining, or just moments of tourists, employees etc. The content of comments of interest from online users society is the price of services. The rest are mainly fan pages that create their comments as "reminders" to increase public interaction. This shows that information about service prices has yet to be given by fan pages, causing the public to ask questions. This shows that the fan page has yet to strongly attract the public participating in this social networking platform to comment on clip posts (accounting for 7.4%) from the fan page.

Second, the number of public interactions with posts differs for every post type. If the post is written with an image, it will interact more than a post with a short clip. Specifically, we surveyed for seven months (from January 1, 2023, to July 31, 2023). On the page of Mỹ Khánh Tourist Village – Cần Thơ, there were 385 posts. Of these, 138 posts are clips (accounting for 35.8%) of the total number of posts, but there are only 7,429 likes (accounting for 10%) of the total number of likes, comments (7.4%), and shares (7, 6%). Conversely, posts with text and images have high likes and shares (like 90%, share 92.4%, comment 92.6%). The same is valid on the Cần Thơ Tourism page - Cần Thơ Tourism. The effectiveness of communication about tourism on the social networking platform Facebook through written posts with images is higher than posts with clips. Besides, this page tends to convey messages about Cần Thơ Tourism through writing with images more than clip posts. Specifically, out of 137 posts, only eight are clips (accounting for 5.8%) of the total posts. It only accounts for 2.3% of clip likes out of 4569 likes, comments (2.2%), and shares (0.8%) for 127 posts. In general, posts on these two pages can be easily searched through hashtags to group the content of the posts. However, the hashtag keywords of these two fan pages overlap in content between posts and hashtag content without a clear division of content into each category, making it difficult to find past information.

These two fan pages have overlapping content in their hashtags, making it challenging to find specific information from past posts. While hashtags can help group similar content together, it is vital to have clear categories so users can easily search through and locate the information they need. The administrators of these pages should consider organizing their hashtags in a more distinct and user-friendly way.

### 2.2.2 Current status of communication about Cần Thơ tourism on Tiktok accounts

When we typed the keyword "Cần Thơ Tourism" in the search toolbar on the social networking platform TikTok, like when doing on Facebook, hundreds of user accounts appeared. To ensure survey consistency on the two platforms, the authors selected two user accounts introduced as "Mỹ Khánh Tourism Village- Cần Thơ" [8] and "Cần Thơ City Tourism" [9] of Cần Thơ Tourism Development Center.

**Table 4** The statistics table shows the number of likes and followers of interaction on TikTok.

Account name	Likes and follows page
Mỹ Khánh Tourism Village - Cần Thơ	10.200/1693
Cần Thơ City Tourism	418/83

For the Mỹ Khánh Tourist Village, Cần Thơ account. However, there is a sketchy information introduction; there is only a link to the website [www.mykhanh.com](http://www.mykhanh.com) but no contact phone number or user authentication from Tiktok. As for the Cần Thơ Tourism account, the user authentication location information could be more varied and professional. In the introduction, this account only has the hotline number of the Development Center. Cần Thơ Tourism. This shows that these two channels need to be more professional in building the channel's image and brand positioning on social networks.

As for the quantity and content of information, the survey obtained the following results:

**Table 5** The statistics table shows the number of comments, shares, and views of interaction on Clips

	Total Clip	Comments	Shared	View
Mỹ Khánh Tourism Village - Cần Thơ	217	179	281	403.978
Cần Thơ Tourism	29	5	28	17540

Table 5 shows that the Cần Thơ Tourism account has few interactions with the public. The content posted on the Cần Thơ Tourism account still needs improvement, is impromptu, and does not regularly produce tourism media products (7 months but only 30 video clips). This account mainly updates current news about tourism activities but does not focus on producing content based on tourism products. Although the Mỹ Khánh Tourism Village-Cần Thơ account on Tiktok has more likes, follows, and comments than the Cần Thơ Tourism account, it is still "modest, not attractive, creating a spillover to the public." They are constrained.

Meanwhile, the Tiktok account page of Ong De tourist village (Can Tho) has clips that have reached millions of views through clips of tourists' experiences with the resort's existing tourism products. However, the account Mỹ Khánh Tourist Village - Cần Thơ interacts much with the public. In 6 months (from January to July 2023), this account had up to 217 video clips. On average, every 30 days in 7 months, this account had 1.02 clips published daily. Besides, this page also has many views, 403,978 views per months, 23 times higher than the Cần Thơ Tourism account [8].

### ***2.2.3 Evaluate the effectiveness of communication about Cần Thơ Tourism on social networking platforms***

We have yet to see any set of standards or criteria to evaluate the quality of account activity on social networking platforms, specifically pages on Facebook or TikTok. However, during the research and analysis process, the author team will evaluate the quality of the fan page on Facebook and TikTok platforms according to the following criteria:

The information content is updated continuously, regularly, and quickly. Public interaction includes public comments and sharing to capture readers' interest. The way of conveying information content is easy to access. New and attractive information is easy to search for and written in standard SEO (search engine optimization) style.

It is necessary and valuable for organizational units to use social platforms as communication tools to promote tourism to the public. Accounts on the two platforms have an uneven amount of information shared between the fan page of the tourism service business unit and the fan page of the tourism promotion agency.

On the social networking platform Facebook, the Cần Thơ Tourism fan page, although regularly updating information, has a small number of posts, not periodically, and has no regular posting plan but depends on inspiration or available content. The article has not been taken care of and hardly uses hashtags to divide the information content, making it difficult to find information, so the effectiveness of communication and reaching users is impractical. In addition, although this fan page has an address, email, and contact phone number of the Cần Thơ Tourism Development Center, the information has yet to be verified, so the legitimacy and officiality of the page have yet to be established. In construction, there is a risk of being falsified and providing false information that can make the public lose trust. Accounts on the TikTok platform also operate spontaneously, not periodically or regularly, so their effectiveness in reaching the public could be higher.

As for the page of Mỹ Khánh Tourist Village, Can Tho, there is more investment in communication activities because this accounts for a tourism business location. In contrast, the account is a page run by the Tourism Development Center under the Department of Literature, Sports and Tourism Management (according to the introduction page) needs more investment in content. This page has a clear plan and frequency of sharing content; the content and images shared are taken care of, and 100% of the posts use hashtags to link content between topics. However, these hashtags are too general and do not have a specific division by topic. This fan page must also have legitimacy (verified information from Facebook and TikTok). However, this tourist area's effectiveness in reaching the public on the Facebook platform is more effective than the account on TikTok. The TikTok site account is impractical, and the content has few unique and outstanding features.

The survey results show that the social networking platform Facebook is more suitable for tourism promotion activities in the form of articles with images than the TikTok platform. The TikTok social network platform has outstanding advantages in tourism promotion communication activities in the form of short clips that can go viral at any time. Due to Tiktok's characteristics as a music video social networking platform, it has a significant advantage over Facebook when communicating about travel on social networks.

### ***2.3 Proposing and recommending solutions in applying social media (Facebook and TikTok) in promoting Cần Thơ Tourism today***

First, developing a specific and clear communication plan with an orientation for the channel is necessary. Train human resources to understand how social networking platforms operate and their principles.

Second, owners of these social network accounts in particular and social network accounts in general need to build and reposition page images on platforms such as contact information, addresses, hotlines, and website addresses, linking all platforms together to help the public easily recognize and access them, avoiding impersonated accounts.

Third, build a strategy for the channel: determine the name for the channel and reshape the content to build appropriate content from the perspective of state management to self-business locations with diverse content. Site administrators also need to listen to feedback and comments from the public, which is necessary and valuable in the content creation process. Besides, it is also to update the situation, trends, and understanding of the social situation. Listening to the public is not just about browsing through information but also about thoroughly understanding the information systematically, in depth, and with the true nature of the problem.

Fourth, tourism promotion sites need to create methods of communication that change perceptions, thoughts, and travel behavior—training and recruiting communications staff with an understanding of digital media and social networking platforms. Units need to regularly open training classes on how to use tools and skills to create content on the internet, issues related to social networking platforms, and how to write for readers. Social networks and search engine optimization (SEO) can exploit maximum effectiveness from social network channels.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The development of techniques and technology has paved the way for the growth of digital communication. Social platforms such as Facebook and TikTok have made it easier for people to access information quickly and conveniently; promoting tourism on these platforms is crucial. After analyzing the data, promoting tourism on social media platforms like Facebook and TikTok is crucial in the digital age. It is important to note that each social media platform operates differently, and the effectiveness of communication methods varies. For instance, using images and text on Facebook promotes tourism more effectively than clips. Conversely, TikTok is better suited for promoting travel through video clips, which can reach a broader audience at a lower cost. Therefore, it is essential to tailor your approach to each platform to maximize engagement and reach.

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