



LODGING interactive

DIGITAL MARKETING | SINCE 2001 | SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

What Motivates Travelers to Create and Share Content?



Traveler Motivation to Create and Share Content

Summer is synonymous with vacation. What better way to create memories of that vacation than to document it with photos, videos and commentaries that are shared with friends and family? This begs the question: What gives the vacationer the motivation to go one step further and share their content online via social networks?

Images and chatter are about sharing moments in time: Experiencing life and all it has to offer. To capitalize on these moments, hotels need to first understand the different motivators within each stage of the traveler's journey so that they capture – and hold – the traveler's attention in all steps of their decision-making process.

Social relationships can be complex but at the heart is the desire to gain information from peers who have previously experienced the resort, hotel, vacation spot, or activity. People tend to associate more closely with others who they perceive to be similar to them. They're perceived as more credible, influential and reliable. A sort of word-of-mouth solicitation that hotel's can use to their advantage.

5 Stages of the Guest Journey

There are five stages in the guest journey. Within all stages people will look to others who have already joined in on a unique activity or visited that location on an off-beaten path, that hotel with great service, that local restaurant with delicious food.

Traveler Motivation to Create and Share Content

1. **Inspiration:** This first stage is the desire for the traveler to fulfill wants and needs for fun, relaxation and/or adventure so your hotel should be searchable.
2. **Planning:** This is the stage when the traveler begins searching out possible destinations, hotels, transportation etc. in consideration for a booking. Your hotel needs to tap into this stage by offering the most relevant information to capture the traveler's attention.
3. **Booking:** It's in this third stage that the traveler finalizes plans based on the search for information including shared content from other travelers who have "been there, done that".
4. **Experience:** In this stage the traveler takes in the best of destination, hotel and local area offerings.
5. **Sharing:** At this point the traveler is now the "expert" and shares their experiences and spreads the word about the location, hotel stay etc. with friends, family and through online social channels.

Travelers Motivation for Sharing Content Online Via Social

In the sharing stage of the **guest journey**, travel photos not only provide personal messages about experiences, but also show brand affinity and can influence others on the same social networks. So the next traveler looking for that unique spot or get-away will look to the shared content that can influence their booking decision.

Olapic , together with Kantar Added Value, analyzed more than 2, 000 social travel images in an effort to determine what motivates people to share travel content online. The data points to what makes the traveler want to share experiences. 38% showed they want to share what they believe to be a unique experience. 23% wanted to share their moments of how to unwind and relax. 21% are excellent quality images that are very engaging. 18% just like to share their entertaining, fun experiences.

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The most shared images were famous landmarks, cities or big events (54%); urban, off the beaten path images (44%); parks, mountains or forests (40%); and ocean, pool or blue skies (34%). These were followed by images of Mother Nature, posing with friends and dining-shopping-eating like a local.

Through images there is a social sharing of the emotion experienced. Hotels want to get travelers to convert in any one of the guest journey stages. So these shared moments in any one of the traveler's journey becomes a hotel's opportunity to drive engagement, gain loyalty and earn a stronger ROI. What is your strategy to engage guests from inspiration to post stay?

Travel Inspiration Through Visuals on Social Media

The best travel stories are relayed through visuals. But where once it was common to look for travel inspirations through magazine photos and enticing advertisements, we now use social media to search out those new experiences and adventures.

In today's social media driven world, interest in a location or hotel is fueled by visual assets shared through social networks. What started out as sharing experiences with peers created communities of people sharing the same interests. Powerful visuals are incredibly engaging. They can help build an emotional bond between your hotel and your guest that are **shared with people** within your guest's networks. And there is great potential for guests to make purchasing decisions based on the emotional connection they make with your hotel.

The Power of Instagram

One of the most powerful tools to tell your hotel story is through Instagram. With now more than **800 million active users**, 8 million Instagram Business profiles and 80% of users following at least one business on this platform, Instagram is satisfying viewer hunger for imagery and, with this, comes the growing influence on travel decisions.

Posts with a location get 79% more engagement and **User-Generated Content** has a 4.5% higher conversion rate. This gives credence as to why Instagram is such an effective marketing tool.

Everyone is buried in day-to-day activities and look to the magnificent landscapes and far-away places for a release from the mundane. Photographers take extraordinary photos of beautiful places that leave us breathless. Travelers find a special little nook and hotel nearby that offers a unique experience.

Travel Inspiration Through Visuals on Social Media

All of these images make us want to be there too. We want to experience and see what the photographer or traveler saw. It's more genuine than just looking at a magazine, ad, brochure or pamphlet. The visual story shared will be authentic and being authentic is what today's traveller expects. Going from seeing the visual on Instagram to making a hotel booking is a far cry from what it was a decade ago.

Instagram Influencers

But visuals on Instagram are not only a place to inspire travelers to be or do what others have done but also gives people the desire to create and share their own original adventures. This gives rise to influencers who can provide an incredible ROI.

Through these Instagram visual assets, hotel digital marketers have a great opportunity to tell a unique – impactful story, build guest loyalty, raise brand awareness and increase engagements. So be different than other hotels on Instagram. Leverage your place in this medium – use Instagram Stories or Live videos and tag places in your posts so that it allows people to easily discover your content when searching those places. Dare to be different!

About Lodging Interaction

Headquartered in Parsippany, NJ, Lodging Interactive is a full-service digital marketing and social media engagement agency exclusively servicing the hospitality industry. Through its web design and search optimization division as well as its **CoMMingle Social Media Division**, Lodging Interactive provides effective Internet marketing services to hundreds of branded and independent properties as well as management companies, restaurants and spas. The company also offers fully managed Live Chat agents for hotel websites through its **LiveChatForHotels.com** division.

Lodging Interactive is an HSMAI Adrian Award winner, and has won awards from the International Academy of Visual Arts, Interactive Media Awards, Horizon Interactive Awards, Web Marketing Association, Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts, and Travel Weekly's Magellan Awards have recognized Lodging Interactive as an industry leader.

Lodging Interactive is a proud supporter of the Hotel Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI) and the company's president, DJ Vallauri, currently serves on the Board of Directors of HSMAI's New York Chapter. For more information, please contact sales@lodginginteractive.com, 877-291-4411 or visit the LodgingInteractive.com.

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- Website hosting
- SEO - organic content optimization
- PPC - Pay-Per Click marketing
- Brand e-Commerce scorecards
- Display advertising
- Email marketing
- Strategic online marketing planning



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Thank You!