



Marketing Tourism Online, Part One: The Basics

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This is part one of an article series which will introduce some basic strategies, considerations, elements, and techniques for marketing tourism products online. We plan to update and refine these articles as situations change and when we have new knowledge to present. You can request to be notified when a new article in the series is available.

Opportunities and room to improve

While most tourism organizations are by now familiar with the Internet, far fewer have really gained an understanding of the technologies, new resources, new communication opportunities, and the requirements that they represent. These tips and explanations should prove a useful introduction.

While new technologies provide new opportunities, they don't change the basics of marketing: people, product, price, promotion, and distribution. Know your target markets, understand their purchase decision processes, and offer them the right product, at the right time, for the right price—and correct your course continually.

Shaping the purchase decision process and the tourism experience

Your online communication with customers can be used to shape outcomes in the following circumstances and stages, in relation to a potential tourist's purchase decision and tourism experience. Good communication can:

- Build awareness of a product or destination, and reshape existing perceptions;
- Generate interest;
- Provide information to turn interest into desire;
- Transact the actual purchase or series of purchases;
- Provide reassurance of a good purchase and offer preparatory information for the actual tourism experience;
- Continue to provide information, shape perception, and improve the experience during the tourist's journey;
- Aid and deepen memories after the tourism experience;
- Build upon your relationship to your customer, to add value for both you and the tourist; and

- Encourage referrals and generate repeat business.

There are different goals to achieve and appropriate methods of communication for each of these circumstances. Adding further complexity is the fact that different people (family members, friends, co-workers, etc.) may be involved and have varying importance at different stages of one purchase decision!

In conclusion

Despite these complexities, there are some basic guidelines that will help you communicate and market effectively online. The next in this series of articles presents advice for attracting visitors to your website.

Leave Home Productions provides marketing services and tools to tourism-related businesses and organizations. Our clients benefit from strategies, tools, and creative concepts developed to clarify their needs, make use of their resources, and help them achieve their goals. We specialize in promotions, online communication, distribution and the creation of multimedia and Internet tools. Leave Home also supports marketing with traditional media formats and personal communication. We work to develop solutions that support healthy growth for our clients' business and sustainable tourism for the host communities and environments.

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