# How to Make Post-Truth Work for Tourism Businesses





A political environment of post-truth, confirmation bias and alternative facts can work well for tourism business marketers who are brave and have finely tuned customer antennae.

That is the argument made by Carolyn Childs, co-founder of MyTravelResearch.com in her blog Stand & Deliver: How Tourism Businesses Can Profit In Our Post-Truth World.

She observes that people are more likely to believe things that confirm their existing positions than information that contradicts them. In the last couple of years consumers and voters have stopped feeling the need to apologize for such post-truth biases.

“So are we saying it is OK to not tell the truth in marketing? No we aren’t!” says Childs. “But if you know who your customers are and what your brand values are, then you can make a decision on what to comment on and, just as importantly, how to comment.”

Childs says that a good example of this is the response that some US destinations have made to the potential impact from the attempted travel ban on some (mostly Muslim) markets.

Travel brands that feel they know their customers have responded boldly. “They have identified that they have more to lose than gain by keeping silent. They have therefore launched communication campaigns that reflect their own alternative position on these issues,” says Childs.

She cites the clever move by San Francisco (You’re #AlwaysWelcome Here) and Los Angeles (#EveryoneIsWelcome) to launch tourism campaigns setting the record straight. Both emphasize that everyone is welcome, regardless of ethnic, cultural and sexual orientation.

But brands which have a customer base across the political divide can also exploit this trend. Jet Blue’s “Reach Across the Aisle” and Heineken’s Worlds Apart online adverts fight the belief that disagreement and entrenchment are the new normal. The brands celebrate people that put aside personal and political differences. The message? Our brand believes unity is better than division.

Childs says both Jet Blue and Heineken position themselves as brands that clear up misunderstanding and remind us of our common humanity. “That’s a powerful message for any brand. It’s like taking a stand without taking a stand.”

However, she warns that companies should not jump on the latest trend bandwagon. Don’t be cynically opportunistic. It could backfire.

“It’s that tiny sliver in time, when the thorniest, most divisive issues of the day become safe enough – but not so safe that they’re passé – for brands to speak out, take a position and reap endless buzz,” says Jonah Sachs, the CEO of branding agency Free Range Studios.

Understanding your customers allows you to work out what you have permission to say and what you don’t,” says Childs. “Think about how your customers would react to this issue and what they would expect you to say about it,” she advises.

MyTravelResearch.com goes into the importance of branding, persona building and understanding customers in clear detail in their Marketing Plan Blueprint and Five-Step Tourism Marketing System.

Readers can enjoy Childs' full blog on post-truth and tapping into the latest trends at https://www.mytravelresearch.com/stand-and-deliver-how-your-tourism-business-can-profit-in-our-post-truth-world/.

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MyTravelResearch.com is a market research and marketing firm specializing in the travel, tourism and aviation industries. Its specialty is providing insights that are actionable.

Founded by principals with lifetime careers in travel, tourism and aviation, MyTravelResearch.com exists to build the visitor economy and successful tourism businesses. It does this by putting the voice of the customer and best practice business thinking into an easy to implement, hands-on approach via an innovative membership model. MyTravelResearch.com can help:

* National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) meet the expectations of their industry by acting as an extension of their research and marketing resources
* Businesses make more informed decisions. (It is like having your own research and/or marketing team)

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