It’s 2017 And This Is Why It’s Time for Your Online Tourism Marketing to Get Real





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Destinations, hotels and tourism businesses should seize the opportunities of digital democracy created by the semantic search revolution that has only just begun, says Bronwyn White, co-founder of MyTravelResearch.com, which is launching a free webinar series for tourism marketers

WHEN Google switched its algorithm to semantic search in 2013 it began to clear away dodgy SEO practices and leveled the playing field for small operators and destinations. It made it easier for small businesses to create an honest strategy to rank well online in Google and the search engines.

A few years on, the main outcome is that page one of a Google search will be different for every user, every location and every desktop or mobile device.

Today, tourism businesses and destinations therefore have the opportunity to rank well for their ideal customer in Google’s organic search results – as long as they commit to building online trust, reputation and authority over time.

Relevance and trust are the new currencies in town. They have given travel businesses and destinations opportunities that we are unlikely to see again. It’s like being at the beginning of time once more, a time when tourism businesses can not only survive online, but thrive.

However, there’s no quick fix. If you want to be on the first page of your ideal customer’s Google search – as MyTravelResearch.com has done for the terms “travel research” in certain regions – you have to be consistent in your online marketing. This means consistency in branding and content marketing. Post relevant, good quality content and post often.

To get results you have to be clear about who your customers are and have a well-defined brand that guides your visual choice and gives you a consistent tone of voice and messaging.

The Five Steps
Clear branding and customer targeting are the baselines. In addition, there are five steps you have to also take:

1) Make sure you’re on Google My Business (it’s free).
2) Ensure your site is mobile friendly (you can check at https://search.google.com/search-console/mobile-friendly for free – and Google gives you tips how to make your site mobile compatible).
3) Realise that content is king. Create content that is useful, relevant and meaningful. Ensure quality over quantity
4) Make sure your web site and your social media platforms are soundly branded in terms of content, language and image choice.
5) Ramp up the number of images and videos you have on your site (Google loves this).

For visual content don’t think you need to spend big money on video production. You don’t. Videos

uploaded from smart phones are often deemed more ‘authentic’. For example see “Whale of a Time” or “Who are Roo Looking At?” at http://www.news.com.au/travel/australian-holidays/tourism-australias-favourite-social-media-posts-of-2015/news-story/1ec3b7a4183886142db1cf5e5e474e66.

Importantly, to achieve a strong online presence in the brave new world of semantic search all the above elements have to work together. Remember, travel related content is the most watched content on YouTube. In western countries people spend about 13 hours doing online research before making a travel purchase (22 hours in China).

People everywhere are perplexed and overwhelmed by the abundance of digital marketing choice. If customers are confused by your brand, search engines will be too. So focus your online branding, messaging and be consistent.

Turn the above insights into action and put an end to ‘hope marketing’.

The full Five-Step Tourism Marketing blog can be read at http://www.mytravelresearch.com/5-step-tourism-marketing-system/.

* MyTravelResearch.com will launch free webinars where they teach destination marketing organisations and tourism businesses the methodology to successfully implement the five-step tourism marketing system. The webinars start 28 February. Find out more at http://www.mytravelresearch.com/5-step-tourism-marketing-system/.

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About MyTravelResearch.com
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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