

How to Convert Travel Dreamers into Bookers at the Start of 2018



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Before they are triggered to book a holiday, dreamers need an emotional connection to a destination, says travel trends specialist MyTravelResearch.com

At this time of year, millions of people all over the world start dreaming about their next holiday as they return to work after the December-January break.

The travel industry needs to inspire those dreamers via an emotional connection then trigger them into making a booking, says MyTravelResearch.com, which shows travel destinations how to convert travel trend insights into actions that grow visitation and yield.

“Many tourism businesses don’t enjoy marketing,” says Carolyn Childs, co-founder and strategist for the company. “They prefer to focus on delivering the experience. But to the potential customer, the first touch point is part of the experience. If a travel brand is not there at the dreaming stage, they will likely miss out altogether.”

MyTravelResearch.com defines the ‘path to purchase’ as dreaming, planning, booking, anticipating, en route, at destination, and post-holiday sharing. It’s not often as linear as that, but travel destinations need to make their presence felt at each step.

At the dreaming stage Childs says of destination marketing organisations, “Your job is to inspire the customer either to take the trip, or to choose you. The more emotional and engaging your content the more it will prove ‘sticky’ and get them to move from dreaming to planning and booking.”

Childs shows that ideas and actions on the path to purchase can loop back. For example, there are three ways people enjoy a holiday: anticipating, experiencing and remembering. The remembering part drives future behaviour (such as return visits) or inspires dreaming about travel among friends and colleagues.

The Importance of Visuals, Especially Video

In the early dreaming stage marketing visuals and storytelling are critical. Travel promotion needs to evoke a positive emotion. Research shows that enticing colour in marketing images often acts as a trigger to book. Research by Xerox shows that coloured visuals increase a person’s willingness to read content by 80%. Colour boosts recall by 82%.

The link between videos and dreaming is clear. A Google/ICT Ipsos study shows that 51% of leisure travellers are inspired by online travel videos, 69% of business travellers, and 55% of affluent travellers.

A Corona Extra beer advert (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9KywSwR-6w>) filmed around surfing on the west coast of Mexico has over one million views on YouTube. “Imagine being Mexico’s tourism promotion board and having that fall in your lap!” says Childs.

So almost any type of video can be a catalyst: those made by destinations, hotels, tour operators, travel experts, travel channels or ordinary travellers who have made and posted a video.

A great video doesn't necessarily have to be expensive to produce a dreaming effect. "You don't need huge budgets," says Google UK sales director, Dr Bernd Fauser. "It's more about the content people engage with...you just need a good idea."

The time frame between dreaming and booking varies. For major trips it can be months. For short breaks the dreaming to booking phase may take place the same day. Sometimes a booking can be triggered by a hot deal, but the person has to have been dreaming about the destination to some extent beforehand.

Childs therefore argues that even though people are still in the dreaming stage, there should be a strong call to action visible to move them beyond dreaming and planning onto booking.

The goal from the destination marketing organisation's point of view is to drive conversion, increase yield and build loyalty, she says.

New for 2018, MyTravelResearch.com has created a detailed Customer Journey analysis report with practical tips for member organisations that subscribe to the MyTravelResearch travel trend report series at <https://www.mytravelresearch.com/pricing/>.

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Editors can download a hi-res image of Carolyn Childs and this press release in Word & Text versions at <https://app.box.com/s/317ilgckjdbq6188z9887kki3svulhr>

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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