

## QUICK TIPS ON HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO MARKET YOUR BUSINESS

In 1997 [Six Degrees](#) launched the social media phenomenon. Initially considered a passing fad created for the enjoyment of youngsters; today it's one of the most powerful and affordable marketing tools for businesses all around the world to use. Popular platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have become an invaluable way to engage a wide audience without costing an arm and a leg. And with over 2.5 billion active global social media users, one can understand why. However, while the tools are largely free to use, we have some tried and tested tips to help you make the best of social media. Here FlightSiteAgent's marketing guru Astrid Beyers shares a few do's and don'ts when using social media to market your travel business.

### **Know your audience**

By knowing who is listening/ watching, you can develop content that's relevant and valuable to them which is way more likely to generate interaction. Establishing who your audience is also provides direction on how well content is performing e.g. are more visual or copy heavy posts preferred? Stick with the 80/20 ratio where 80% of your posts are travel inspired visual and shareable content and 20% being sales orientated. This will ensure your page isn't too promotional - a big turn-off - but a place where your followers can be inspired to travel and learn.

### **Less is more**

No one likes their timelines cluttered with brand messages and posts. Limit the amount of times you post to suit each platform. For instance, it's more acceptable to post often on Twitter than it is on Facebook. Limit the amount of posts accordingly. For Facebook, unless you have important news or updates to share, stick to 3 – 4 posts a week. With Twitter, feel free to join in on a conversation that's trending by using the shared #hashtag such as #FlightSiteAgent.

### **Choose your tone and stick to it**

From your profile picture and cover photo to your posts and images, ensure everything that you share aligns with your business's brand, messaging and offering i.e. travel. This will eliminate any confusion and portray your business as a trusted service provider.

### **Be consistent**

Test various times of posting until you find one that works for your followers. It is easy to determine which time most of your followers are online with Facebook's page Insights. Once you've established the ideal time, stick to it. There are various free tools to use to make your life a little easier because one isn't always near a device to post. Taking the time to schedule posts also means you are more likely to follow a plan instead of resorting to sub-par content when the pressure to post is on.

To schedule posts on Facebook, click on the drop-down arrow next to "publish". This gives you the option to choose when your post will go live. Whilst Twitter does not have a built-in function to schedule Tweets, free software like [Tweetdeck](#) makes it easy to schedule multiple Tweets.

### **Encourage engagement**

Producing content and starting a conversation takes thought and time, so invest in quality images and good copy, even though it is so short! Also don't be slow to respond and engage; keep the

conversation going by responding to questions and comments to capitalise on and leverage posts. According to [SocialPilot](#) there are nearly 1,8 billion active social media users in the world with 40 million of those being small business Facebook accounts. Roughly 150k Facebook messages are sent every minute and 500 million tweets shared per day! This shows just how fierce the competition for eyeballs really is and how vital it is to ensure your response time is no longer than a couple of hours, if that.

Another rule when it comes to engagement is to never ignore or delete negative comments. Negative feedback, although sometimes discouraging, gives you the opportunity to show your true colours. Be transparent, don't ever delete these comments unless it borders on harassment, and use it as an opportunity to build trust. Whether that means setting the record straight when you have been falsely accused or taking the time to investigate and resolve problems, it shows readers that you care about them and your reputation.

### **Measure results**

If you're active on Facebook, be sure to use the "Facebook Insights" function or for all other platforms use [Hootsuite Insights](#). This allows you to decipher which of your posts are performing the best, how many new page likes have been received, what the most popular time to post is and how your followers are responding to your content i.e. are they engaging? This valuable tool could help you determine whether you're on the right track with your content and sharing - or if you need to shift focus.

By following these simple tips you'll keep your clients informed and inspired so that when the time comes to book their next holiday, they'll consider choosing you to do it for them.

ENDS