

TOURISM ON LINE: HOW CAN WE TAKE THE FIRST STEPS?

A practical guide to successfully start a tourism activity on line

Index

Introduction	3
Register your domain	5
Choose suitable contents	7
Build your online reputation	10
From here on it's all downhill ... just pay attention to the reviews!	14



Introduction



Introduction

Launching into the immensity of the web and starting off your online tourism business in the right way is a wonderful challenge, but not at all to be taken for granted. This is why we have tried to put the main advice of an expert like Mirko Lalli on paper.

Let's take a few steps with him before starting the adventure!



Register your domain



Register your domain

To be able to communicate your tourist project effectively, today more than ever, a proprietary online presence is needed. This acts as a basis for concentrating the traffic that arrives directly, that brought by the content you create, from social media and from the newsletter to consolidated customers . Registering a domain is the first activity that must be carried out in order to communicate your brand. The .it brings with it a whole series of identity values linked to Italy that are fundamental in a sector like tourism. In any case, it is always advisable to register more than one domain: hotel-brand.it, hotelbrand.it, hotelbrandlocalità.it, even if only one will be used in the communication. This is to intercept every possible search for your brand, precious as it is already directly addressed to reach you.



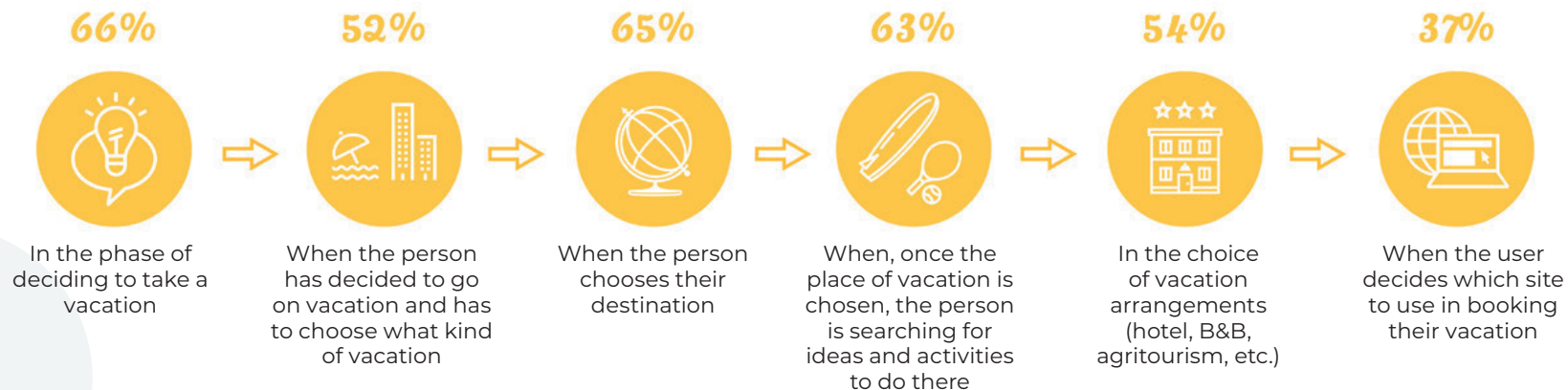
Choose suitable
contents



Choose suitable contents

Also in tourism, content is the most important part of digital communication. The stories that work best are those that touch the emotional sphere. Creativity, identity and authenticity are the keys to tourist content that work, giving the customer the perception of being about to have a unique experience. For this reason, on a site that speaks of tourism, it is essential to use photos, videos and multimedia content, showing both the facility to which the site refers, and the geographical area that hosts it and the attractions it offers.

Also the reviews and photographs sent to you by customers during and after the holiday are very important. This is the so-called “user generated content”, and also stories told in first person by tourists are paramount because they are perceived as authentic by visitors. Multimedia content is essential at different stages of the process by which the tourist destination and specific facility are decided.



5 THINGS TO DO

- Do not deceive customers with unrealistic presentations: lies soon catch up with you, and today the customer has a megaphone in their hand.
- Read the social media conversations about you - they can teach you strengths and weaknesses of your structure that you did not know.
- Reply to all the reviews, especially the negative ones, with calm and rationality. Other readers will appreciate your willingness to solve problems and converse in a civilized way.
- Avoid deleting things you do not like. It's risky - it's not worth it.
- Remember that people talk to each other: pay attention to private messages like email, text messages, Direct Messages.

5 THINGS TO AVOID

- Do not limit yourself to "recycling" contents taken from others: enhance them with your own know-how and style
- Use advertising and content in combination: do not wait for content to create traffic to the site by itself.
- Do not just talk about yourself or your product, and especially do not simply include sales content.
- Do not use tools that produce automatic postings, spend little time but do it with a tone of voice appropriate to the environment in which you are
- Do not treat people who have booked your facility from outside portals differently, but make sure they address you directly next time.



Build your reputation
on line



Build your reputation on line

The management of reputation is a very important point in a digital strategy and marks a very important (also cultural) change of direction, because it shifts the role of the manager from who “suffers” the reputation to those who “actively” manage it. Obviously the best time to start managing your reputation is when all the components of your digital ecosystem are working and monitored.

Reputation has a direct impact on sales: it is important to be honest and answer all the reviews, without making up false reviews!

5 PIECES OF ADVICE FOR MANAGING YOUR REPUTATION

1. Take the fixed price list off the site →

Keeping the year-round price list on the site is not something to keep doing. Remove the price list and use yourself a proprietary booking system: it is of no use showing the customer the July rate when they want to book for September!



2. Explain clearly that the price lists are dynamic →

If my clients talk to each other and discover that they have different rates, could problems arise? Yes, customers talk to each other, they are famous for this. Have you ever flown with Ryanair, travelled on the Italian high-speed trains or taken a cruise? Even though they talk to each other, why do the guests, not create problems due to different tariffs? Because they have been informed. Explain on your site and in your price lists that the rates are dynamic and depend on the requests of your guests. Make them participate in the fact that it is precisely their desire to come on holiday that forms the rate.

3. Easy Revenue →

If you have a 40-room hotel, and in a period usually of low turnover you have already sold 38 (maybe to a reduced rate group), why not try to sell the last two rooms available at a higher rate than the low season tariff? The rate of a room should depend more on the request, the moment and the number of rooms that remain to be sold, rather than on a predetermined price list made up a year before.

4. Feedback →

Let your customers express their opinion on your facility both among themselves and with you – it doesn't change anything. In the first case you will have a return of image and turnover, because you know that most of the time the story is positive. But chatting with the customer is also an advantage for the hotelier, and obtaining parameters and information on the tastes and expectations of the guest is essential for obtaining positive feedback. Too often customer relationship management is underestimated, but it is always advisable to talk with guests. Greetings, congratulations, invitations to book, giving information that the requested room is no longer occupied, spreading useful information on the destination that gives value and experiences to the guest are all important. After the stay, asking how the holiday has gone must not be left to the careful management of the OLTA (Online Travel Agency), but should also be your job!



From here on it's all downhill ... just pay attention to the reviews!



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By studying the online profiles of many tourist facilities, two trends are emerging that are becoming increasingly consolidated. There is the reputational context, with the manager who interacts gracefully with the most vehement reviews and the most heated criticisms, and the average time of the responses.

The more the manager responds to reviews and the faster they do it, the greater the care taken towards guests' needs will be perceived by the traveler, and as a result fewer and fewer critical reviews will arrive.

Positive

The positive reviews are answered simply by thanking for the feedback and going into detail on the aspects highlighted by the customer. Consider that those who read the reviews always read the response of the owner of the facility and if a person makes a compliment it is a good idea to thank them.

Negative

When the customer leaves a negative review, however, it is good to thank them for the feedback and provide concrete and justified explanations in order to create a serious and trustworthy image of your facility. At the same time, this diminishes the value of the review, highlighting the positive aspects of the hotel. Sometimes a little irony in the answer can also be useful.

Look out for false reviews!

The phenomenon of so-called fake reviews is very limited and mostly concerns TripAdvisor, and only in a small number of reviews. There are false positives (the manager who positively reviews himself or buys "packages" of reviews) and false negatives of customers or incorrect competitors. Both activities can be considered at the limits of legality.

And the reviews in the social media?

Reviews and positive comments on social media channels are very important for reputation. It is often easier and more immediate to post a photo with comment on the Facebook page of a tourist facility than to write a review on Booking. Do not ignore them – reply to those too, and report them on the site. Users love reviews and if we simplify their life by making them easy to find it is better for everyone.

Five errors to avoid in responding to reviews:

1. using over-complex language
2. writing with little attention to the register
3. attacking the user; remember that the customer is always right!
4. responding with a standard text: you'll sound like a robot
5. hiding behind formulae like “the management” instead of using name and surname

Have a good trip!