

eBook

How to use social media to grow your travel business



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Social media has the power to boost your travel agency

Nearly everyone is on social media—even more so since the pandemic.¹ Used with care and attention, social media can take your business to new heights and reach ever-wider audiences.

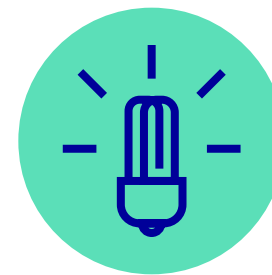
You can use it to:



Build brand awareness by growing your reach



Create relationships and community with a network of like-minded travelers



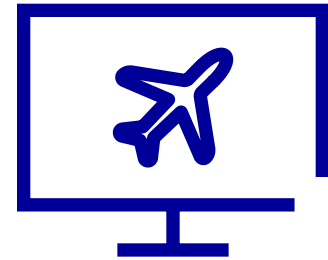
Inspire and encourage bookings by giving you a platform for aspirational travel content and advice



Get insight into what travelers want from a travel agent through reporting and a direct connection with travelers

We show you how to tap into these benefits, but first, let's cover which social media platforms you could consider.

¹ <https://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-strategy/new-global-social-media-research/>



Which platform is best for travel agents?

It can be tempting to sign up quickly and just start posting. But take a minute to decide which platform is the right fit for your agency.²

There are many social media platforms to choose from, each with its own personality and audience. The most popular are:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- TikTok
- LinkedIn

In this guide we'll focus on two of the most popular and established go-to sources of travel inspiration and advice, Facebook and Instagram (owned by Facebook). Between them, these two platforms have more than 1.5 billion active users.³

68% of millennial Facebook users and 60% of millennial Instagrammers say they found ideas for their most recent trip on these sites.⁴ Similarly, 47% of baby boomers use Facebook while planning their travels, and 72% of Gen Xers scroll through images—usually on their lunch-break—that can provide inspiration for travel, too. And for the digital natives, 65% of Gen Z are on Instagram every single day, loving the short-and-sweet content and inspirational images.⁵

In summary, Facebook and Instagram are great starting points for travel agents.

Whichever social media platforms you choose to focus on, limit yourself to a couple at first. And before you decide, do a little research. Apart from reading this guide, you should also talk to your travelers to find out what platforms they feel most comfortable with and use the most.

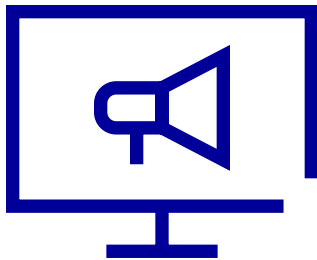
Facebook and Instagram have more than 1.5 billion active users between them.

² <https://buffer.com/library/social-media-sites/>

³ <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/markets/100215/twitter-vs-facebook-vs-instagram-who-target-audience.asp>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/business/news/reach-travelers-when-theyre-deciding-where-to-go-with-trip-consideration>

⁵ <https://www.adido-digital.co.uk/blog/generational-social-media-trends-in-travel/>



Facebook, Instagram, or both?

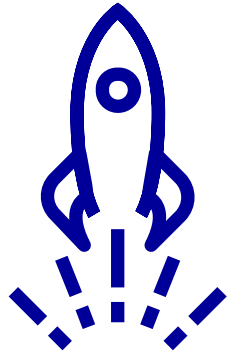
If you want to focus on one platform initially, here are a few key differences between them to help you decide.

But remember, there are also lots of benefits to being active across *both* platforms.

- They're owned by the same company. That means lots of their tools—such as Instagram and Facebook Live—are similar, making them easier to master
- The shared ownership makes it easy to post content across the two sites, sometimes just a couple of extra clicks, enabling you to reach a wider audience with low effort
- When you're ready to use paid advertising, you can manage your campaigns across both platforms in one⁶

	Facebook ⁷	Instagram ⁸
Audience age	25 to 34 years old	18 to 24 years old
Audience income	\$30k to \$60k	\$30k to \$75k ⁹
Typical platform content	Usually lead by words in posts and supported by a combination of images and video. Live video and Stories are increasingly popular	Entirely lead by images or video (you can't post without one or the other) supported by usually short captions. Live video, Reels and Stories are popular
Advantages of platform	Ideal for starting a dialogue with potential customers and building communities in your business page and associated groups	Ideal for inspiring travelers by showcasing aspirational images and videos
This platform is best for ...	Building relationships and discussions	Sharing inspiration and staying visible

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/1513393428972189?>
⁷ <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/facebook-stats-for-marketers/>
⁸ <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/instagram-stats/>
⁹ <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2021/01/28/instagram-demographics-2021>



Getting started with social media

Set up a business account

To access all the benefits on these platforms for your travel agency, set up a free business account. The associated business tools—such as the Professional Dashboard on Instagram—gives you enormous insight into how your account is performing and who your audience is, when they visit, and what appeals to them.

On both platforms, it's really simple to set up a business account. Just use [this](#) step-by-step guide for Facebook¹⁰ and [this](#) one for Instagram.¹¹

Write your bio

Take time to write your bio. Choose those few words carefully to give users a great first impression of your business.

An Instagram bio is 150 characters long and acts a little like a brand storefront. Include basic details like what you do and where you operate as well as a compelling reason for users to scroll further. Keep your tone light and friendly and include a call to action, whether it's clicking through to your website or getting in touch.

For Facebook, the About section is longer, giving you more room to add extra detail. For businesses, there are three key sections: core business details, such as location, contact details, and the more info field, where you can add background on services you provide and give a sense of your brand personality.

Head [here](#) for a selection of templates and great bio examples.

Guidance for your first post

Time to get out there! There are a few key things to remember when writing your first few posts on any social media platform.¹²

- **Write for your audience:** Think how your key demographic speaks and try to use that same language
- **Keep it short:** Succinct posts hold attention better
- **Be visual:** Always add an image, infographic, or video where you can. Visual posts routinely get better engagement—articles with images get 94% more views¹³
- **Add a call to action:** That could be asking a question a user can respond to in the comments. Or it could be encouraging them to click through to your website to access a great deal

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/104002523024878>

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/502981923235522>

¹² <https://ampersandmke.com/writing-social-media-5-tips-engage-audience/>

¹³ <https://neilpatel.com/blog/visual-content-you-need-to-use-in-your-marketing-campaign/>



Using social media to expand your reach and build brand awareness

People are far more used to engaging with businesses on social media platforms, too. One billion users contact a business via Facebook messenger every single month¹⁴

As a travel agent, you can leverage this to improve your reach and drive brand awareness.

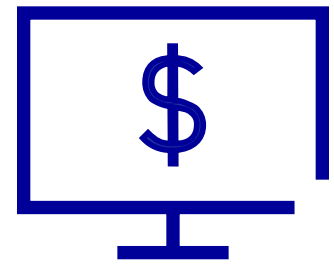
- Share content consistently and at different times of day to drive engagement with the biggest pool of potential travelers. Use a scheduling tool, like Hootsuite, to create posts for the week ahead
- Create shareable content—lighthearted memes, topical (but relevant) responses to what's going on in the world, aspirational videos... the more content you share, the more likely you're seen

- Be your true self—don't just promote the latest deals. Use your social media to communicate your brand values, ethos, and expertise
- Share advice / insight on the issues that travelers care about, think sustainability¹⁵ for example



¹⁴ <https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-customer-service/>

¹⁵ <https://partner.booking.com/en-gb/click-magazine/sustainable-tourism-becomes-priority-72-global-travellers>



Is paid content ever worth it?

You can use social media to build a large, engaged following without spending a penny.

But there are occasions when spending a little on a sponsored post can really help. Maybe you have a time-limited deal you want to share or there's niche traveler you want to reach but they aren't engaging with your organic content, for example.

The good news is you don't have to spend loads. Using the Facebook Ads function,¹⁶ you can set a budget and set a target audience, and Facebook automatically publishes your post, targeting your dream traveler, for as long as your budget allows.

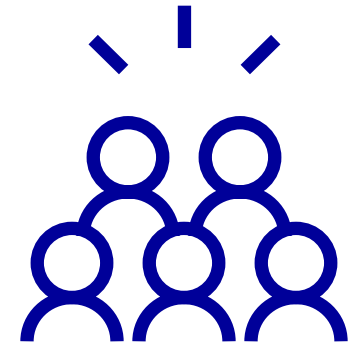
Plus, if you're active across both Facebook and Instagram, you can post run sponsored content campaigns across both platforms simultaneously.¹⁷

That said, there is tons of value you can get for free. And we recommend you familiarize yourself with the platforms and build a community for free, first. Then you can always consider paid ads once you've built your foundations and have a strategy in place.

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¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/business/ads/pricing>

¹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/business/news/facebook-and-instagram-ads>



Use social media to create a community

A small pool of engaged users is far more valuable to your business than thousands of followers that ignore your content.

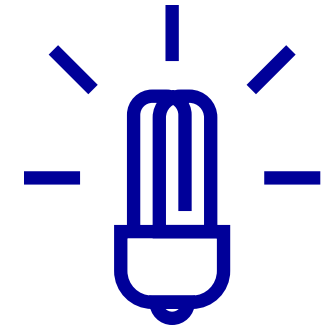
Focus on developing dialogue, relationships and loyalty by creating a small, like-minded community on social media.

- Don't simply post and log-off. Take the time to respond to followers' questions and comments. Use [this](#) helpful guide for tips on how to go about it
- Start conversations. Ask your followers, what's top of their travel bucket list. Do they prefer beaches or mountains? What's their best holiday memory?

- Take advantage of livestreaming tools on Instagram and Facebook to organize Q&As with your community on a particular destination or travel trend
- Consider running a small competition or giveaway to reward followers. Make sure to first read Facebook's and Instagram's rules for what's allowed and not allowed when running competitions on their platforms ¹⁸

Open your social media network up beyond just travelers. Reaching out to similar or relevant businesses in your local area—think hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions—adds to your credibility, which enhances your position as a local travel leader.

¹⁸ <https://origamiglobe.com/competition-rules/>



Use social media to inspire

Over 60% of Instagram users say they find travel inspiration on the platform—both in the early planning stage and when they've booked and are getting exciting about their trip.¹⁹

Instagram is so powerful, it has altered travel patterns. Photographic destinations deemed Insta-worthy—such as Wanaka in New Zealand²⁰—have seen massive spikes in interest.²¹

Your travel-agent feed can be part of this inspiration for travelers if you do it properly:

- Ask suppliers for permission to share visual assets—images, video tours, etc.—on your social media platform
- Prioritize unique properties to showcase, perhaps those local to you

- Add user-generated content into the mix—ask happy travelers you've worked with to send in a few photos and words about their last trip, with permission to share
- Suggest hidden gems in the destinations you know well—such as quirky boutique hotels, hidden away restaurants, or activities off the beaten track



¹⁹ <https://forevervacation.com/the-vacationer/case-study-how-social-media-is-changing-the-way-we-travel-by-the-numbers>

²⁰ <https://www.cntraveller.in/story/new-zealand-tourism-ad-instagram/>

²¹ <https://monitor.icef.com/2020/01/instagrams-profound-effect-on-travel-destination-choice/>



Use social media to better understand what travelers want

Social media is a great way to gather feedback and insights on what matters to your audience. There are a few ways you can approach this:

- Set up a Facebook poll using [this](#) simple guide²²
- Simply start a new thread with a question at the top
- Monitor your brand mentions to see how and when others mention your business in conversation
- Understand who is engaging with your posts and how regularly by checking the free insights dashboards in Facebook²³ and Instagram²⁴ business accounts. These give you fascinating knowledge about your audience's location, ages, engagement times over a 7-day to 30-day period, and what posts they react most positively to
- If you'd like to go slightly deeper with the data, use free tools, such as Buffer and Quintly,²⁵ to create simple analytics reports

Social media gives you almost direct access to your target audience, so use it wisely. Through it, you can curate an extraordinary amount of information about the travelers you serve, which will help to help you strategize and tailor your content and communications—without spending a penny. The more engaged your social media audience is, the greater your visibility. The greater your visibility, the more potential you have to grow your travel business.

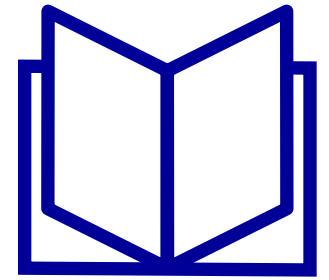
Understand who is engaging with your posts and how regularly by checking the free insights dashboard.

²² <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-do-a-poll-on-facebook>

²³ <https://www.facebook.com/business/insights/tools/audience-insights>

²⁴ <https://buffer.com/library/instagram-analytics/>

²⁵ <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/marketing/2015-03-10/9-best-free-social-media-analytics-tools>



Resources to help you get the most out of social media

Here's a quick recap of all the handy resources referenced in this guide.

[21 Top Social Media Sites to Consider for your Brand](#): A rundown of the key social media sites, what they offer, and which types of businesses they might suit best

[Social Media Demographics to Inform your Brand Strategy](#): A guide to understanding who uses which social media platform

[How to set up a business account on Facebook](#): A step-by-step guide to setting up a business account for the first time on Facebook

[How to set up a business account on Instagram](#): A step-by-step guide to setting up a business account for the first time on Instagram

[How to write every kind of social media bio](#): A selection of advice, templates, and examples of how to write a winning social media bio

[10 Rules of Social Media Engagement](#): This guide focuses on complaints, but it's useful to apply to all types of interaction on social media

[How to create a poll on Facebook](#): From setting a poll up, to gathering data and settling a friendly debate, a comprehensive guide to Facebook polls