

## **The Future of Digital and Tech for Travel and Tourism**

Domestic travel spending in the U.S. reached \$834.1 billion last year and is expected to top \$850 billion in 2017. So what should travel and hospitality stakeholders look for when it comes to digital marketing this year? The number one driver to look out for in 2017? Technology. Technology is shaping the way we travel and the way travel destinations interact with travel consumers. Check out these trends that are on the rise in 2017:

### **Virtual Reality/360 Degree Videos/Live Streaming**

This trend is on the cusp of becoming mainstream in many industries, and the travel industry is ready to use virtual reality. Travel brands are especially equipped to embrace the trend because there is so much to show. Showcasing venues and amenities, virtual visits to show a meeting space, wedding venue, or conference location, or letting travelers “try before they buy” a product or service – just a few ways the travel industry can use this technology to their marketing advantage. Similar to virtual reality, 360 degree videos are a tool to help show the full experience so people can see a piece of what they’re missing.

Live streaming is also a great way to engage potential travelers, and is already accessible to all users. Facebook Live, Periscope, and even Snapchat are great ways to engage potential travelers, especially to promote events or destination. These trends are growing rapidly, and your brand would greatly benefit from embracing it before competitors do.

### **Social Media**

Social media platforms are especially important and relevant for travel marketers because of how important social influence is to the industry. People often post photos, reviews, recommendations, and overall experience after vacations, and other use those communications to make future decisions about travel. Social media is a great platform to encourage visitors to share their great experiences.

### **Mobile**

There’s no question that mobile development and technology plays a central role in digital marketing for every industry, but it is especially true for travel and tourism. As we’ve previously written, it’s important to reach travelers at every [micromoment](#) in the travel consumer’s journey. More and more travelers are performing mobile searches, especially when they’ve already reached their destinations, to book last-minute tours, find fun activities, or grab a tasty meal. In addition to the necessary basics like responsive web design and social, there is a rapid growth opportunity for travel marketers in mobile apps like Instagram and Snapchat. Reaching out to younger generations on these platforms will become a necessity for travel marketers in the very near future.

### **Content Marketing**

The need for fresh, quality content isn't going away in any industry, and is especially relevant for travel and tourism. Search engine algorithms look for keyword-driven content, so keeping consistently updated content on a website will help with rankings in the long run. But it's not just written content like blogs, ebooks, and landing pages that are important – videos and infographics help a company gain authority and brand visibility as well. The most engaging content is the kind that encourages audiences to picture themselves at your travel destination. Don't cut your content in 2017, make sure that you continue your content strategy to build out quality content throughout the year.

### **Accommodation Sharing**

Accommodation sharing apps like [Airbnb](#) are not going away anytime soon and will continue to disrupt the market in 2017. In fact, the plan is to continue to [build the brand](#) out to accommodate group travel and long-term housing in the near future. In some major cities, Airbnb has also launched the option for hosts to [create experiences](#) around the city for guests. Travel destinations would benefit from getting back to the roots of their community and creating relationships with Airbnb hosts so when guests ask for recommendations your destination is top of mind.

The travel industry is seeing some drastic shifts in marketing due to new trends in technology, and marketers should embrace these trends with open arms. These trends are providing the perfect opportunity for travel marketers to engage and resonate with potential travelers, and it will be exciting to see how brands embrace them to their advantage.