The Top 50 Questions Asked by Travel and Tourism Marketers

Hello!

Here at CrowdRiff, we've run more webinars than we can count, and received hundreds of questions about how travel and tourism brands plan, scale and measure visual marketing today.

We decided to pick the top 50 and make them available to you.

How early should I start planning the visuals for my campaign?
What tips do you have for keeping all of our visual content organized?
How does UGC affect my website performance?

These are just a few of the questions we've heard over and over again as we engage with travel and tourism marketers across regions and industries every day.

We've grouped the following questions based on a marketer's typical campaign workflow—planning, sourcing, organizing, publishing and optimizing—but feel free to skip ahead to those that are most relevant to you. We've also included a section on how to evaluate the capabilities of a visual marketing platform like CrowdRiff, in case you're ever considering one.

Our hope for this guide is that it a) becomes a valuable tool as you work with visual content, and b) it helps you learn what user-generated content and a visual marketing platform can do for you.

We hope you enjoy!

Amrita Gurney
VP Marketing at CrowdRiff

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taliavane

Planning
Visual Content

01
What is user-generated content?

User-generated content (UGC) is any visual or textual content about your brand that your visitors create and share on their own. It includes photos and videos shared on social media, as well as reviews and testimonials posted on third-party review sites, like Google, Yelp, or TripAdvisor.

Countless user-generated visuals are created and shared by your visitors and greatest brand advocates every day:

60%
of leisure travelers are using social media when they travel[1]

85%
of leisure travelers use Facebook to post vacation photos and videos[1]

48%
of buyers say that UGC is a greay way to discover new products[2]

On any given day, there are millions of photos and videos being shared on social media by travelers: resort guests playing by the pool, tourists eating a slice of pizza in Rome, or a plane wing floating in the clouds during a beautiful sunset. These are perfect examples of UGC that you could be using in your marketing.

Dan Holowack
Co-Founder & CEO,
CrowdRiff

rachel.hershberger

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02

What are the benefits of UGC, and why do I need it in my marketing?

Photos and videos captured and posted by travelers have a powerful influence on someone's decision to pick a certain destination, attraction, or resort. Here is why you should incorporate more UGC in your marketing:

UGC is trustworthy and credible

What would you trust more? A sponsored post promoting a new resort in the Carribean or a photo from someone in your social circle enjoying their time there? According to Nielsen, two-thirds of consumers trust the opinion of other people online, and 83% trust the opinion of people they know[3].

UGC tells an authentic brand story and engages with your audience

UGC is social proof that real guests are enjoying your experience. In fact, brand engagement rises by 28% when consumers are exposed to both professional content and user-generated videos[4].

stephloureiro

[3]Source: Nielsen, 2015
[4]Source: Comscore, 2012

UGC showcases fresh content that never gets stale

Did you know that almost 100 million posts a day are uploaded to Instagram?[5] Tapping into this content ensures you never have to use the same post twice.

UGC helps stretch your budget

According to some estimates, a professional photography shoot can cost anywhere between $600 - $10,000[6]. UGC gives you a cost-effective way of acquiring original and impactful photos that can supplement the owned content you already have. With user-generated visuals, there's no longer a need for actors, equipment, or waiting for a day with perfect weather to get your shot.

Mark Mezzapelli
VP Business and Partnerships, CrowdRiff

darwin.cosico

03
What role should visual marketing play in my content strategy?

Probably a bigger role than it does now! There are a couple key trends that indicate visual storytelling isn't going anywhere, and that it should take centre stage in your content strategy.

@mihaelafedoseev

1 When it comes to communicating brand story, 65% of senior marketers believe that visuals are core to their strategy[7].

2 More than half of B2C content creators say creating visual content is their top priority[8].

3 55% of travel marketers plan to spend more on Facebook and Instagram in 2019[9].

Leo Leung
VP, Customer Success and Operations, CrowdRiff

Every moment in your guest experience tells a story visually. Your marketing effectiveness grows exponentially when it's no longer just your brand story, but becomes part of your guest story. A good visual marketing strategy sets the stage so that your guests can perform on it.

Jesse Desjardins
Strategist, The Guest Experience Map

[7]Source: CMO Council, 2015
[8]Source: Content Marketing Institute, 2016
[9]Source: Sojern, 2019

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04
What brands can I look to for campaign inspiration?

There are so many great visual marketing campaign ideas out there. My favourite recent example has to be Destination Canada's UGC-powered video, **Found In Canada**. A quick YouTube search will reveal why this video is so powerful.

Within a period of 2 weeks, they'd acquired rights to over 2,600 photos and videos from social media, and turned them into a series of short, fun, and exciting videos. Best of all: these videos went viral, reaching over 3 million views within a week.

Throughout this guide, we provide countless examples of brands using visual marketing to generate brand awareness, increase conversions and influence direct bookings. If you're hungry for more though, take a look at this **blog post on the topic.**

Lucas Luxton
Director, Tourism Partnerships, CrowdRiff

shridevij

Start with your current or ideal guest's brand. Look at what they are trying to get done, what they love, what they hate and what they share on social media. There you'll unlock problems waiting to be solved. Problems that other brands haven't addressed yet... Probably because they are too busy looking at other brands for inspiration.

Jesse Desjardins
Strategist,
The Guest Experience Map

05
How early should I start planning the visuals for my campaign?

If you're planning a professional photo or video shoot, the earlier you can plan the better. We recommend 8-12 weeks in advance. For UGC visuals, you need to allow time for sourcing and acquiring rights to content, but people typically respond within 48 hours to a request, so you can plan 1-4 weeks in advance.

Amrita Gurney
VP Marketing,
CrowdRiff

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My advice is to start planning your visual content the moment you decide to produce a campaign, because your visuals can affect so many other facets of the project. From the branding, to the audience you decide to target, even down to what mediums the campaign will be distributed through, the visuals should be one of the driving elements your marketing team is making their decisions around.

Kristen Pepper
Marketing Manager,
Huntsville/Madison County CVB

adindadwikar

06
What are some examples of successful social media ads using UGC?

Not too long ago, we analyzed 600+ tourism ad examples from **America's State DMOs**. These lessons don't just apply to destinations; there's a ton of useful information for all travel marketers. Here are some of our favorites.

Tennessee Vacation

British Airways had recently launched a new direct flight from London to Tennessee, and so the State of Tennessee wanted to get on the radar of British travelers. Instead of directly serving them ads, however, they partnered with well-known travel bloggers: Hand Luggage Only.

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Why we love it

This ad campaign is an example of a soft, top-of-the-funnel approach, which uses paid media to reach an audience in a way that doesn't seem like an ad. It introduces their destination to their target audience, and gets them to start thinking of Tennessee as an attractive travel destination.

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Visit PA

Even though carousel ads were designed for showing off multiple different pictures, Visit PA used some out-of-the-box thinking in order to encourage more engagement and more clicks.
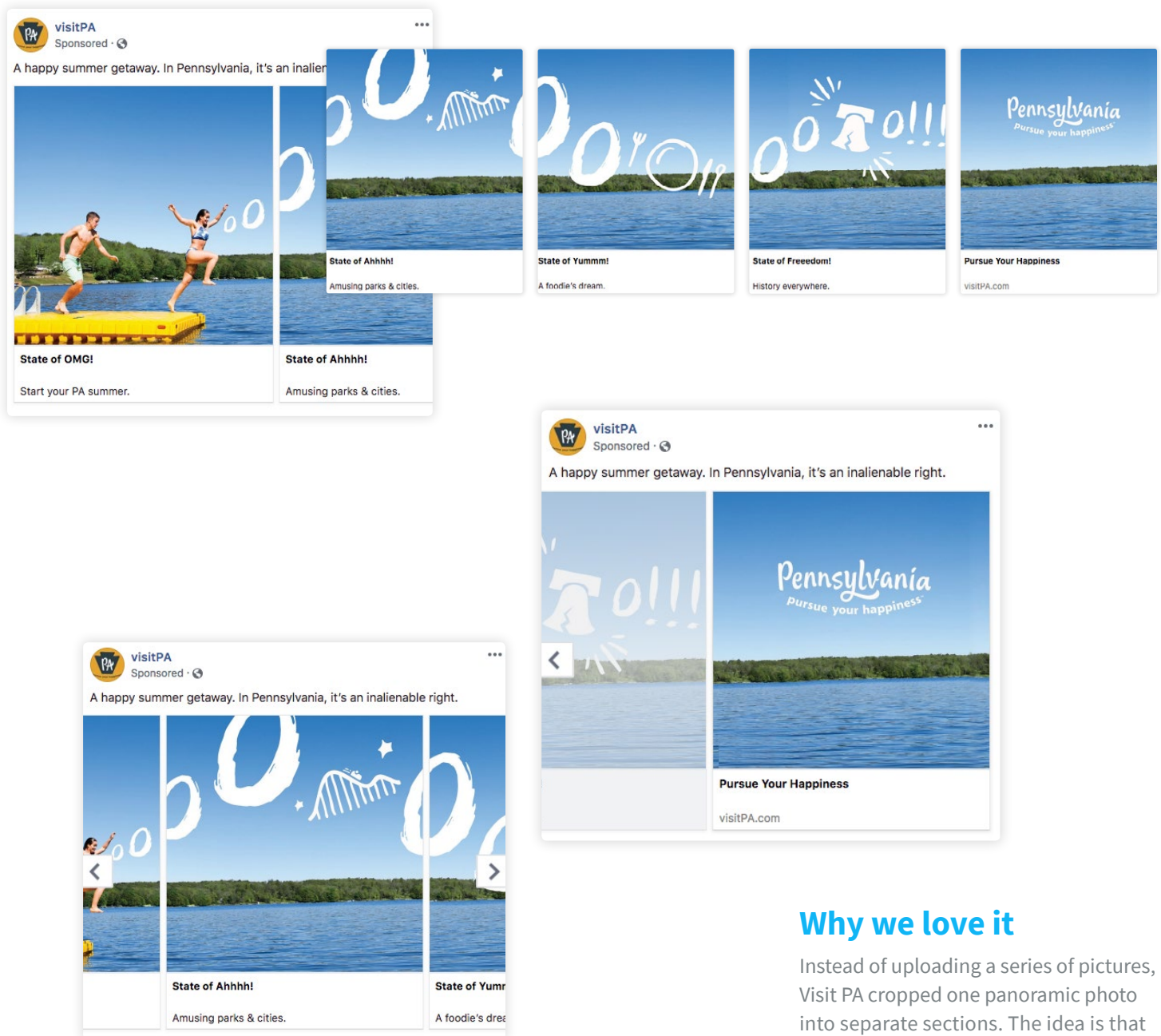
Why we love it

Instead of uploading a series of pictures, Visit PA cropped one panoramic photo into separate sections. The idea is that someone who sees the ad only catches a part of the picture, sees that there's more, and is more compelled to click right to see the whole image.

South Carolina

While DMOs tend to showcase popular dishes from their best restaurants in food-themed campaigns, what Discover South Carolina does is a little different. They're featuring recipes for staple South Carolinian dishes in their ads.

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Why we love it

The ad creative is made up of 5-15 second videos, with close-ups on vibrant ingredients as they're chopped, tossed, and transformed into a local dish. The videos feel very cinematic, as many shots are in slow motion, yet scenes switch quickly, so as to not lose the viewer's attention.
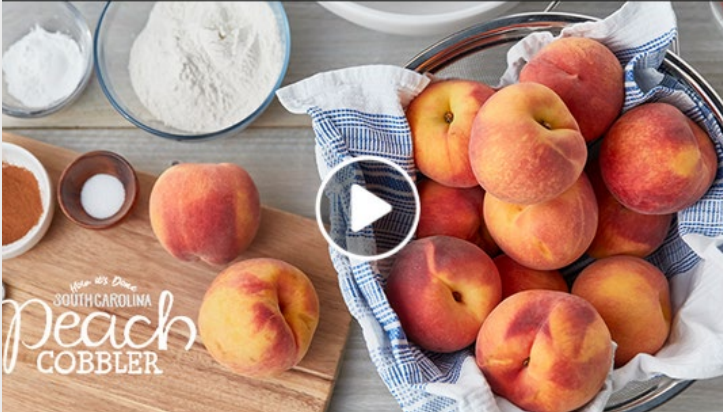
Adam Lacombe
Director, Demand Generation, CrowdRiff

Discover South Carolina
Sponsored

Discover how to make this easy and delicious Peach Cobbler recipe.

DISCOVERSOUTHCAROLINA.COM
SC Made Peach Cobbler
From the locally sourced peaches to the homemade batter, it will have your mouth watering.

Learn More

Discover South Carolina
Sponsored

Discover the secret to making the best South Carolina Pimento Cheese.

DISCOVERSOUTHCAROLINA.COM
SC Pimento Cheese
See what simple ingredients are needed to make this mouthwatering dish: SC Pimento Cheese.

Learn More

07
Is UGC more effective on any particular social media platform?

Only you know how to best reach your target audience. But you should be aware of the trends: According to Sojern's State of The Travel Industry Report, Facebook and Instagram are the most effective platforms for targeting new audiences—especially from the Airline and Cruise verticals[10]. Across all regions, Instagram is the most effective platform for driving reach and brand awareness.

Julia Manoukian
Senior Content Marketing Manager,
CrowdRiff

Where Facebook and Instagram Are Most Effective for Travel Marketers

Legend:
- Facebook Ads Most Effective
- Instagram Ads Most Effective

Categories:
- Targeting New Audiences
- Driving Reach and Brand Awareness
- Personalizing Messages and Promotional Offers
- Driving Direct Bookings
- Showcasing My Property or Travel Experience
- Retargeting Users from My Site
- Engaging Loyalty Members
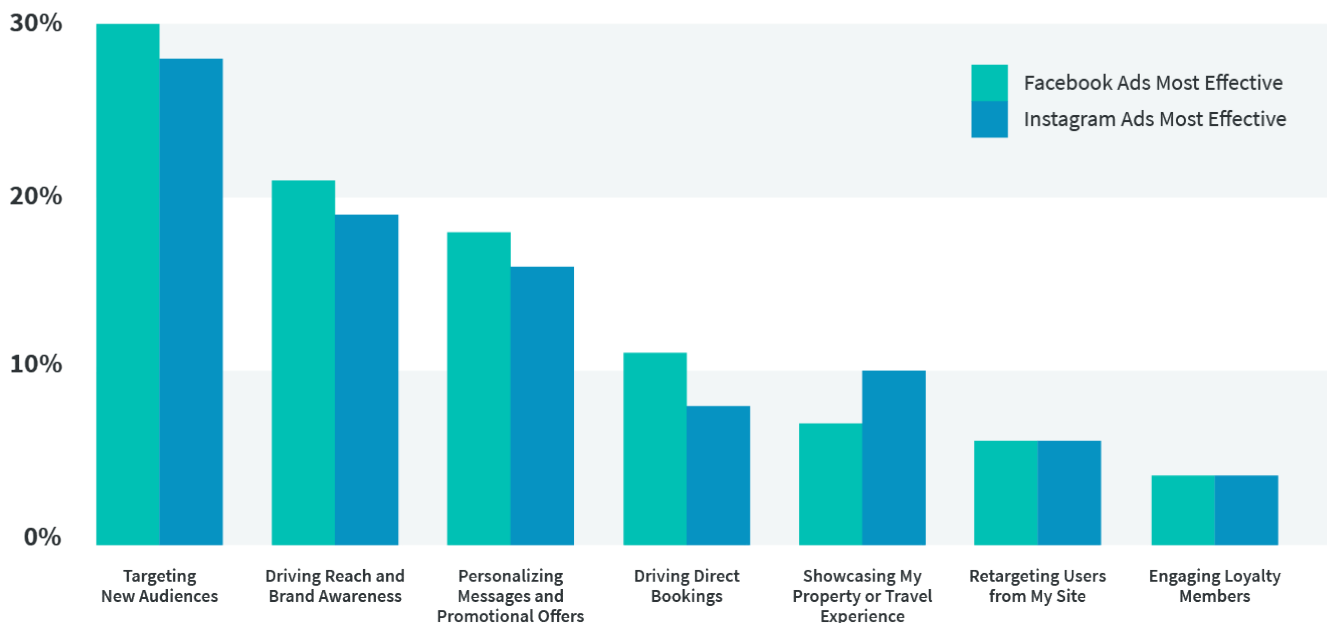
Where is Facebook or Instagram advertising most effective in your marketing strategy?
Source: Sojern, 2019

08

How can I incorporate UGC into my video content strategy?

Doubling down on your video strategy makes a ton of sense. According to Comscore, brand engagement rises by 28% when consumers are exposed to both professional content and user-generated product video[11]. Here are three ways to start gathering more UGC for your video content:
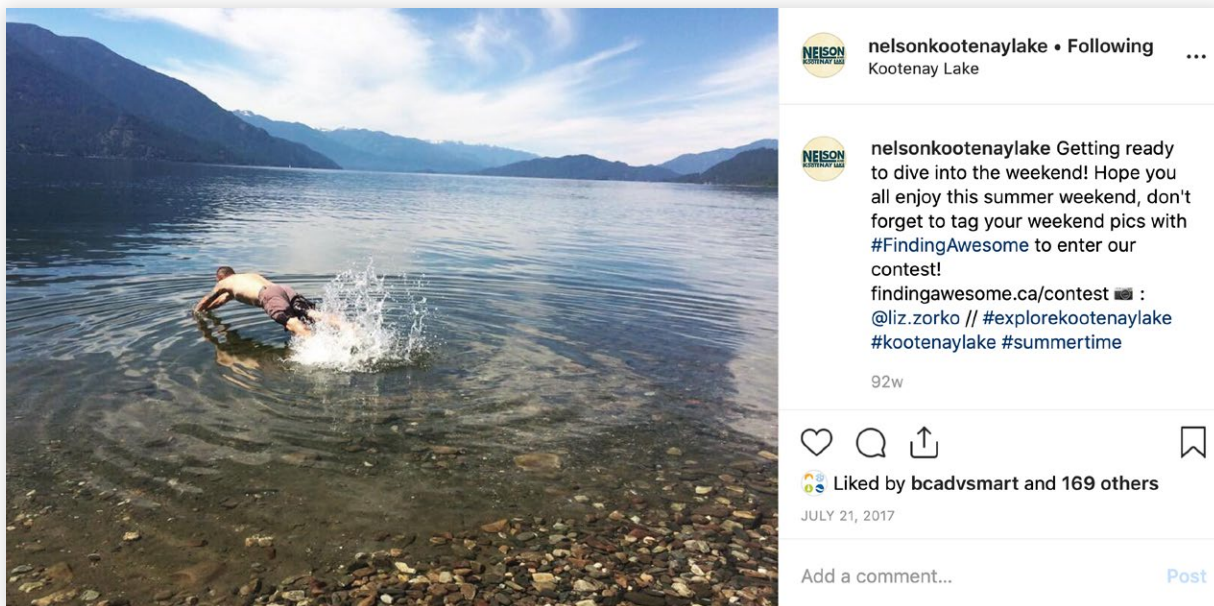
1. Transform user-generated images into user-generated video

Get rights to your favorite photos and stitch them together to create a great video for your marketing efforts.

2. Host a user-generated video contest

Try building a contest allowing fans to submit a short video as an entry for a prize. For example: Ask your followers to submit a video showing off a free activity in your destination.

3. Give in-house videos a 'user-generated' look

More travel brands are ditching the perfect, magazine-quality visuals for unfiltered, unedited and ultimately authentic content.

Courtney Malinas
Director, Sales,
CrowdRiff

meldoingthings

"**Traditional marketing used to be all about perfectly glossy images and videos. Customers understand when they are being sold to, and I believe we all question things that look too perfect now. Authentic and spontaneous content can add a degree of credibility to a content strategy.**"

Diana Mendes
Brand and Marketing Manager from Destination Queenstown

09
Any tips for bringing personality and identity to a destination marketing website?

One of the biggest benefits of UGC is building an authentic and personable brand story. In short, it's a win-win for both you and your fans. Josh Collins, Digital Communication Manager from Visit Franklin, says it best:

"In our approach, visuals are one of the biggest keys to our success. We are not looking for a transaction between visitors. We want to inspire people to want to visit and ultimately develop a relationship with them."

Something as simple as adding a UGC gallery on your homepage can increase your time on site by 4x—a sure sign visitors are liking what they see[12].

Leo Leung
VP, Customer Success and Operations, CrowdRiff

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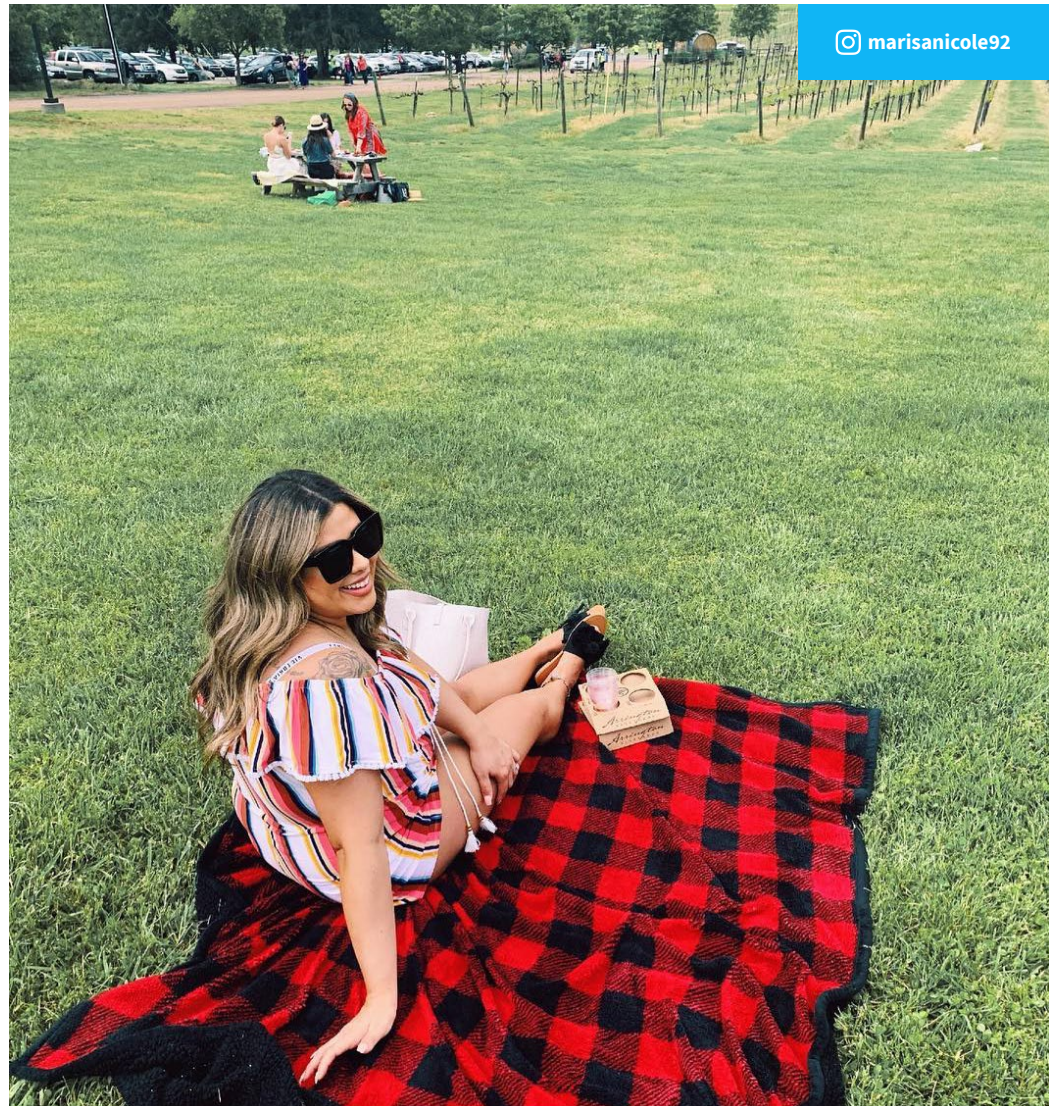
10
What are some DMOs that do the "insider's guide" style well on their website?

Tourism Whistler has a whole Insider's Guide blog. They feature posts like "Insider's Guide: When to Visit Whistler in the Summer" and "Insider's Guide: Eating with Young Kids In Whistler" from staff who are also contributors, locals and lovers of the scene.

Featuring suggestions and input from locals is arguably the best way to make your website feel like an insider's guide, because these people truly are insiders! And people love getting the inside scoop—as many as 70% of consumers place peer recommendations above professionally written copy[13].

If you'd like more examples, check out **our latest eBook.**

Adam Lacombe
Director, Demand Generation, CrowdRiff

inggieartha

Sourcing
Visual Content

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Is there a benefit to having a professional photographer or videographer create content for our social media channels?

Or can we just use all UGC?

mami_and_lou

Great question. It depends on the situation. Ideally, most brands would have a mix of aspirational (UGC) and sponsored content.

Capturing landscapes, for example, is a perfect example of when to use a professional. Same goes for buildings or photos of food.

But when it comes to shots that have people, a lot of professional photography tends to look staged. The majority of consumers agree—customer reviews are trusted 12 times more than marketing coming directly from the organization[14].

Also consider that although professionals can capture your attraction at every angle and produce high quality content, you'll pay the price.

Amrita Gurney
VP Marketing,
CrowdRiff

12
How can I encourage people to share more visuals of my destination or attraction?

There are so many great ways to create more UGC, we thought you'd never ask! Here are a few tactics that have worked well for other travel and tourism brands.

Encourage it in your marketing

Photo opportunities on-site, at exhibits and events help give people ideas of when and how to take photos. One of our favorite examples of this is Vancouver Island's Road Trip Map. Below, you can see that they've provided a blank space of authentic recommendations from visitor centres. It's accompanied with a prompt to share with their content hashtag online.

bobtbridge I guess you could say she's heels-over-head in love with Bobbing. #ItHappensOnBob
---
#Repost @notsofitashlemari

30 likes

JULY 1

Add a comment...

Repost the kinds of visuals you're trying to source

Have you heard of Bob the Bridge? It's a celebrity bridge that connects Iowa and Nebraska. Visitors are encouraged to post their photos using the hashtag #ItHappensOnBob. They've even had the Harlem Globetrotters, the Rockettes, and all sorts of people Bobbing (and yes they also turned it into a verb!).

Bob's video blog posts have been viewed over a million times, and he's not slowing down. The team at Visit Omaha shares that their Bob campaign is really resonating with people because they can see it in visual terms. That user-generated content is what keeps Bob alive, and helps us share his personality with others.

Source: jonahswferguson, Tourism Nanaimo, Adventure 360 Team

Use photo prompts

Prompts for user generated content don't have to be costly, or require a permanent installation. Sometimes it's as simple as curating an ingenious angle, like this group of artists did in Nanaimo, Vancouver, to revitalize old, vacant buildings through mural paintings. A community project has turned into a social phenomenon all because one mural was designed to encourage photography.

Reward people

You can also use contests as a way to get people to share their visuals directly with you. This is especially useful if your typical visitors are in demographics where they may not be using social networks as frequently or at destinations with poor cell coverage.

Julia Manoukian
Senior Content Marketing Manager,
CrowdRiff

hyereeyeo

13
What are the different ways I can find more UGC?

Whether or not you have a platform, the easiest way to source visuals is by searching:

- Hashtags
- Geo-locations
- Users
- Keywords
- Pages

Look out for content that is high-quality and relevant to your brand. Pay special attention to photos that elicit emotion. Think people smiling, animals, or awe-inspiring landscapes. It's not always easy sifting through hundreds of images, but trust us, it'll be worth it!

That said, marketers who use a visual marketing platform have experienced a 90% decrease in the time they spend searching for visuals[15].

Mark Mezzapelli
VP Business and Partnerships, CrowdRiff

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How do I run a successful influencer or brand ambassador campaign to get more UGC?

BECOME A #FRANKLINTN

AmBASSADOR

This is your opportunity to learn what the City of Franklin and Williamson County have to offer visitors. The program is geared toward all hospitality partners who interact with visitors to Williamson County and Middle Tennessee but is open to anyone interested in helping visitors enhance their experience. This afternoon program will be comprised of a classroom presentation, walking tour of downtown Franklin, and trolley tour of Williamson County. Lunch will be provided. Participants who complete this program in its entirety will become certified Visit Franklin Ambassadors.

Visit Franklin Ambassador Program

Watch later   Share

#FRANKLINTN AMBASSADOR

SUBSCRIBE

▶ 🔊 0:04 / 2:36   ▭ 📺 HD YouTube ⛶

A VIP program or ambassador program can vary in terms of how structured they are. On the simplest side, you can have a VIP program where you give certain people perks. For example, you can give someone a discount on your tours or a free tour in exchange for posting about their experience. Encourage them to use your hashtag, which will help their friends and followers learn about you.

Or you can do a more formal ambassador program, like the folks in Franklin, a small town in Tennessee outside of Nashville. They even have an application process on their website. The people who are selected (about 25 every other month or so), get a formal afternoon of training, and tons of opportunities to share UGC around Franklin. They also get a certificate signed by the Mayor and a VIP pass to local area attractions.

Mark Mezzapelli
VP Business and Partnerships, CrowdRiff

15
What's the best way to run a social media contest to get more UGC?

1

#explorebc

Decide on a hashtag

You can either use your branded hashtag or create a new one specifically for the contest.

2

Set guidelines

Set guidelines for how guests can enter and how you'll choose a winner. Best practice to follow is linking to the rules and regulations in your social media bios, so they are easily accessible to participants.

3

Choose a prize related to your travel brand

This could be a complimentary stay at your hotel or a pair of passes to a nearby attraction. Whatever prize you choose, promote it!

4
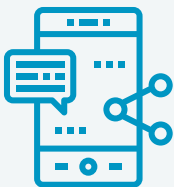
Get the word out

Spread the word on social media and your website to encourage people to enter.

5

Boost engagement

Throughout the contest, repost some of the best entries on your own social media accounts.

6

Pick a winner!!

Talia van Everdingen
Content Marketing Manager, CrowdRiff

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How do I get visual content that helps convert visitors? How do I know what content is performing?

When asked, 35% of marketers say their biggest struggle is consistently producing engaging visuals[16]. Did you know that some innovative travel and tourism marketers are actually using their websites to vet the most engaging visuals? Then, they'll request the rights to the top performing images and use them in print materials like visitor guides, magazines or posters.

Here are the top three ways you can test and track the imagery on your website:

1. A/B testing

Rather than simply comparing traction between two different photos, try out different image formats as well. For example:

- Compare the results of a hero image versus a hero video

- Stack up the impact of static images against an interactive photo gallery
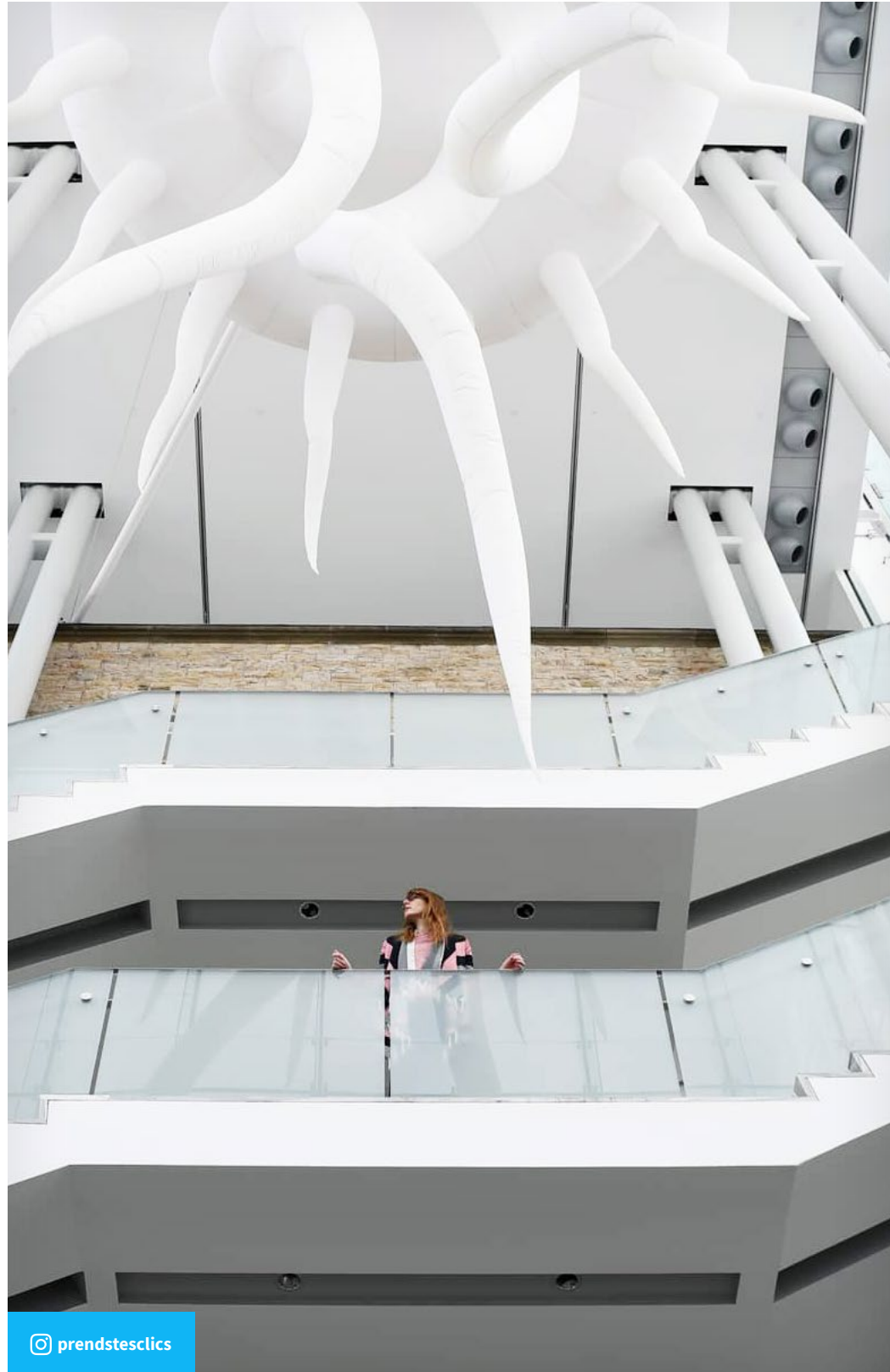
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amanjotksandhu
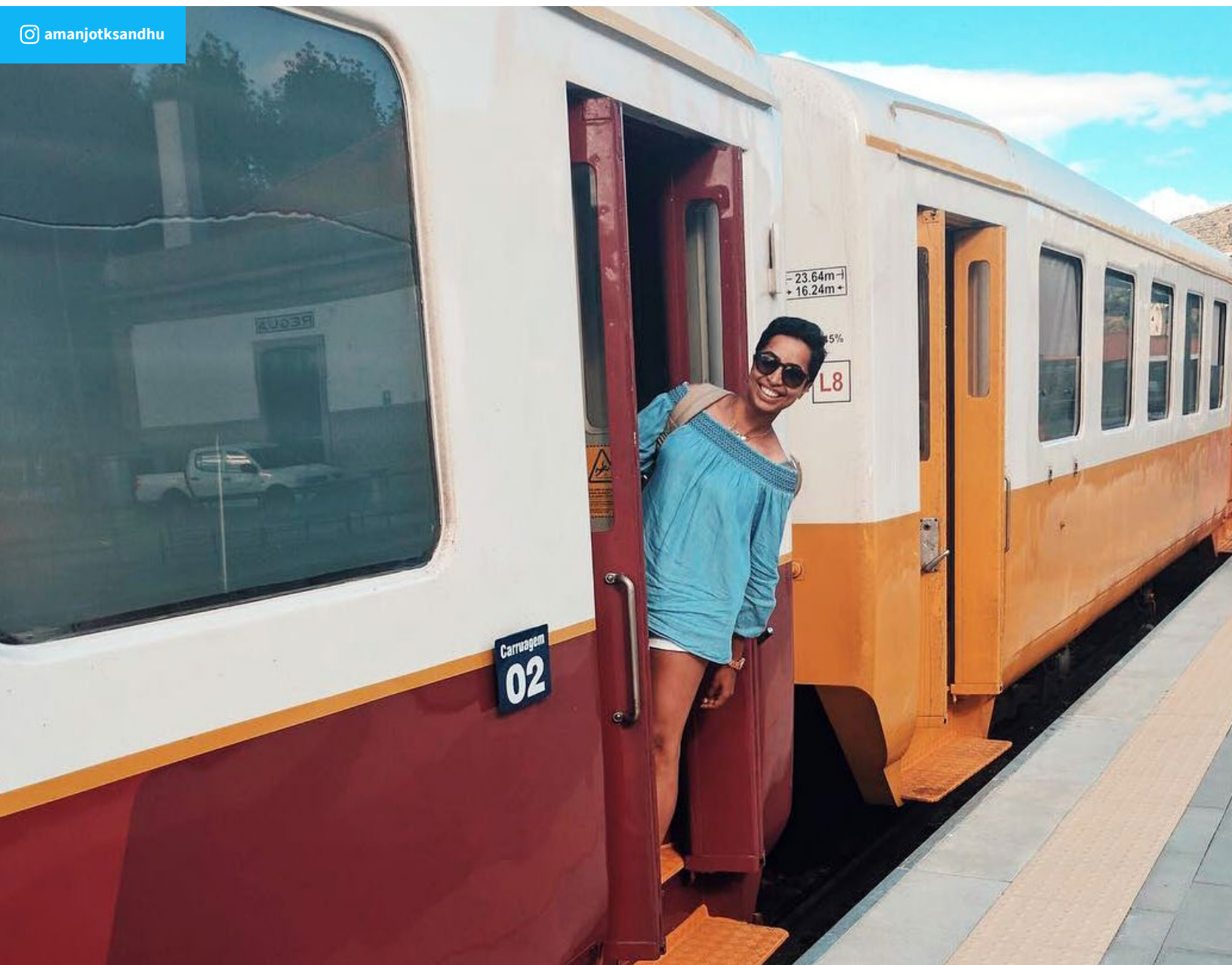
2. Attach buttons or CTAs into visual content (and track them)

To best measure the impact of your website imagery and encourage website visitors to take the next step, incorporate buttons and CTAs directly on those visuals, and track the click-through rates.

3. Have a system to connect the impact of specific visuals with specific website goals

You can either do this with basic manual tracking (ie, compare the conversion rates on a new homepage with the old version), or by using a visual content platform that integrates with analytics software (like CrowdRiff).

Leo Leung
VP, Customer Success and Operations, CrowdRiff

Getting Rights to Visual Content

17
Do I need to ask permission to post user-generated visuals on my website?

If you're displaying a user-generated visual outside of a social network's platform, such as a static image, then you have to ask permission because of copyright, as the user retains the rights to whatever they post on social media.

If you're displaying a user-generated visual through a social network's platform, or through an API partner (like CrowdRiff) of that social network, you do not need to ask permission, as per social networks' Terms & Conditions.

Every social network has specific Terms & Conditions about the content shared by its users. For example, though publicly posting on Instagram and Twitter, users to give permission to these social networks to use, publish, reproduce, display and distribute their content.

Raphael Borja
Customer Success Manager,
CrowdRiff

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When do I need to get rights to a user-generated photo?

First ask yourself this question: Am I taking the photo off its social network?

If so, then the short answer is yes, you need rights.

This includes:

- Reposting a photo to your own Instagram account (this requires downloading the photo and uploading it again)

- Using the photo in digital or print ads

- Displaying the photo on your website without a link back to the original photo

- Displaying a modified version of the photo

suzkmac

When you take a photo off its native social network, it isn't always clear to someone viewing the photo if that photo is owned by you, or if it is in fact user-generated—and that conflicts with copyright law, if you don't have rights to the photo.

Raphael Borja
Customer Success Manager, CrowdRiff

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How can I get rights to UGC?

We hear this question *all* the time. So much that we actually **published an infographic on it.** Start by determining if you actually need rights to an asset. Then, you need to ask the original user if you can use their content.

Do you need Rights to An Asset?

Yes!

- ⊘ Reposting a photo or video to your own social media account

- ⊘ Using a photo in digital or print ads

- ⊘ Displaying a photo on your website without a link back to the original

- ⊘ Displaying a modified version of a photo

No

- ⊗ Embedding a photo using the code provided by the social network

- ⊗ Displaying content through an API partner

🄞 *vaneverdingen*

Ask for permission explicitly in a comment

When you ask nicely, people are generally very happy to let you feature their photo.

Here's a fantastic example from **Tourism Toronto:**

If you ever need a script, follow theirs...

- Show that you appreciate their work with a compliment

- Tell them how or where you'll be using the photo

- Give them a way to explicitly say "yes" to agree

Using this method, CrowdRiff customers have a 65% success rate when requesting permission to use a traveler's photos[17].

Pro Tip

For travel and tourism brands that have more rigorous requirements and want to be extra clear when it comes to UGC rights, invite users to agree to legal Terms & Conditions before they grant you permission to use their content.

- -

You can choose to link your Terms & Conditions in your profile, and direct people to that link when they ask for rights, before they agree.

Raphael Borja
Customer Success Manager, CrowdRiff

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Are there any restrictions to showing works by artists? Is attribution sufficient?

This line is a hard one—as a visual marketer, you can't reproduce copyrighted material. That's why you should always do your due diligence to ensure the image you're using is not owned by someone else.

Heather Spencer
Customer Success Manager,
CrowdRiff

21
What percentage of UGC can be obtained hi-res, so it can be used for print and other publications?

All UGC has the potential to be obtained high-res—you just need the rights! Once you have the rights, you can ask for the original.

Talia van Everdingen
Content Marketing Manager,
CrowdRiff

⊙ _____vl____

22
What is an implied hashtag?

An implied hashtag is when a brand assumes that using a hashtag gives them permission to repost. For example, if you use #ExploreBC, you are giving Destination BC permission to post. We recommend using explicit permission versus an implied hashtag since people may use hashtags without knowing there is any implied consent attached to them.

Amrita Gurney
VP Marketing,
CrowdRiff

aandymartinez

23
Is it necessary to credit the visuals used from UGC in all platforms?

Yes. When you are reposting a photo or video to your own social media account (that includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, YouTube, etc.), you need rights to an asset. That is, of course, unless you took the photo!

Heather Spencer
Customer Success Manager,
CrowdRiff

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aman.shai.xox

Organizing
Visual Content

24
What tips do you have for keeping all our visual content organized?

Some of our visuals are stored in Dropbox, others in Google Drive, others are on people's computers. Often, I have to ask someone else on the team if I want to get a particular image from them.
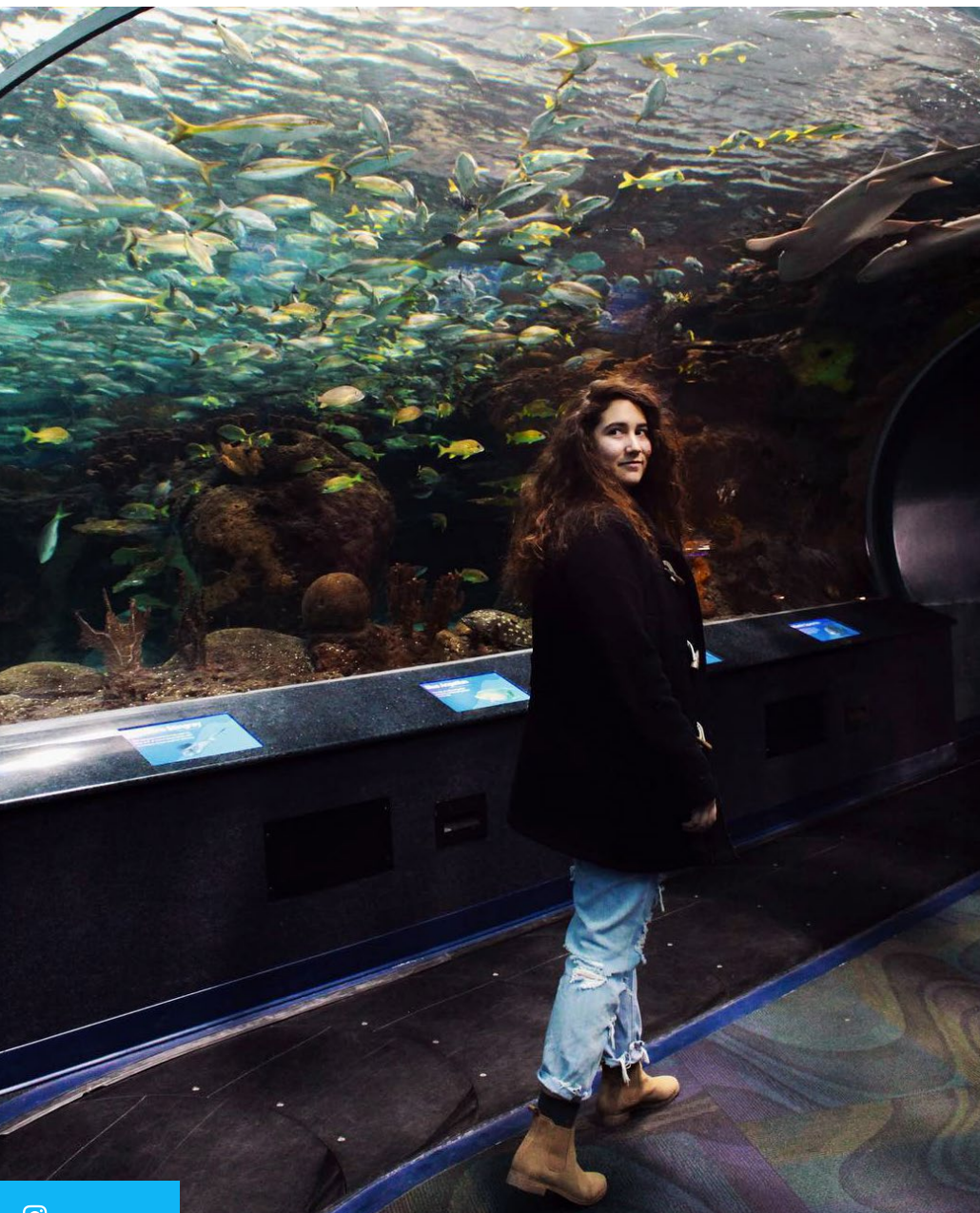
pampovam

Ever hear the old phrase, "a place for everything and everything in its place?" The same goes for visual content.

If your visual assets are scattered across users, systems and folders, it's difficult to find the images you need, when you need them.

Here are two tips we'd recommend to start getting organized:

1 Gather up all your content. USBs, hard drives, cloud storage—you name it. Give it a central hub to live.

2 Tag your content. You may already have a system for organizing content but tags are essential to making search easy.

Now, if you have hundreds or thousands of visuals, it will be incredibly time consuming to tag your content at scale. That's when you might consider a visual marketing platform (like CrowdRiff).

CrowdRiff autotags your visuals so they are easy to find. Many customers like to create albums and folders for specific campaigns, e.g. the Spring Restaurant Week folder or Summer hiking campaign folder.

Leo Leung
VP, Customer Success and Operations, CrowdRiff

kat_leah_

25
What's the benefit of a visual marketing platform versus just storing all our assets elsewhere (like on a hard drive or in the cloud)?

Here's why you should consider a visual marketing platform:

Breathe life into old images

When you have a central hub for all your visual assets, you can easily search and discover not only fresh UGC, but also all the owned assets you've gathered over the years and may have forgotten about. We often hear the surprise when customers tell us they had no idea how many visuals they had! They'd never taken the time to upload all their content into one place.

Save time and work smarter

Say you wanted to find a particular photo, like an elk in front of a hotel. Think about how much time it would take if you had to search through your entire library of visuals. With a platform like CrowdRiff, you can easily do a search based on keywords and find the content you need.

Securely share visuals with influencers and partners

In a few clicks, you can give access to people outside of your organization. Network partners can even follow each other if they want to see what others are curating. Customers using CrowdRiff have sent over 20% of web traffic to their partners by linking their pictures with CTAs[18].

mar.aaaaa

Dan Holowack
Co-Founder & CEO, CrowdRiff

[18]Source: Results based on metadata from 600+ travel and tourism brands

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We have thousands of visuals we've taken over the years. What does the migration process to a visual marketing platform usually look like?

The migration process is easier than you might think.

If you have less than 300 GB of data, you can either upload the files directly to your CrowdRiff platform or send us a share link. We accept from cloud systems like Dropbox, Box, Google Drive and OneDrive.

If you have 300 GB or more, we can send you a hard drive. You then return the hard drive to us and we take it from there!

Elise Taylor
Director of Customer Success, CrowdRiff

maya_ess

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How long will it take to migrate all these assets into a platform like CrowdRiff?

In terms of length, it depends on how many files you send us. For larger transfers (>1TB) it could take up to 10 business days.

Elise Taylor
Director of Customer Success, CrowdRiff

girlmeetssoutheastasia

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When we transfer, won't we lose all the metadata associated with the images?

When you upload items yourself, you can control the metadata associated with each photo, the keywords, and the organizational structure. This makes sense for brands with less than 300 GB of data.

When you're dealing with more than 300 GB, CrowdRiff will assist in the initial bulk upload and we will work with you to preserve as much of the metadata as possible. For example, CrowdRiff automatically translates folders into keywords, so you don't need to create your entire folder structure again.

E.g., an asset with the file path 2017 > Summer > Events > Jazz Festival > IMG1234.jpg will have the keywords "2017", "Summer", "Events", "Jazz Festival" and "IMG1234".

Shri Jamadagni
Senior Customer Success Manager, CrowdRiff

29
How would I share albums with different groups of people? I want to show my exclusive members special content versus the general public.

CrowdRiff's Share Links allow you to share everything from individual assets to entire albums. Share Links let people preview the content you're sending them and take action on the spot. You can also revoke access, customize your Share Link, display user restrictions and share links on mobile devices.

Shri Jamadagni
Senior Customer Success Manager,
CrowdRiff
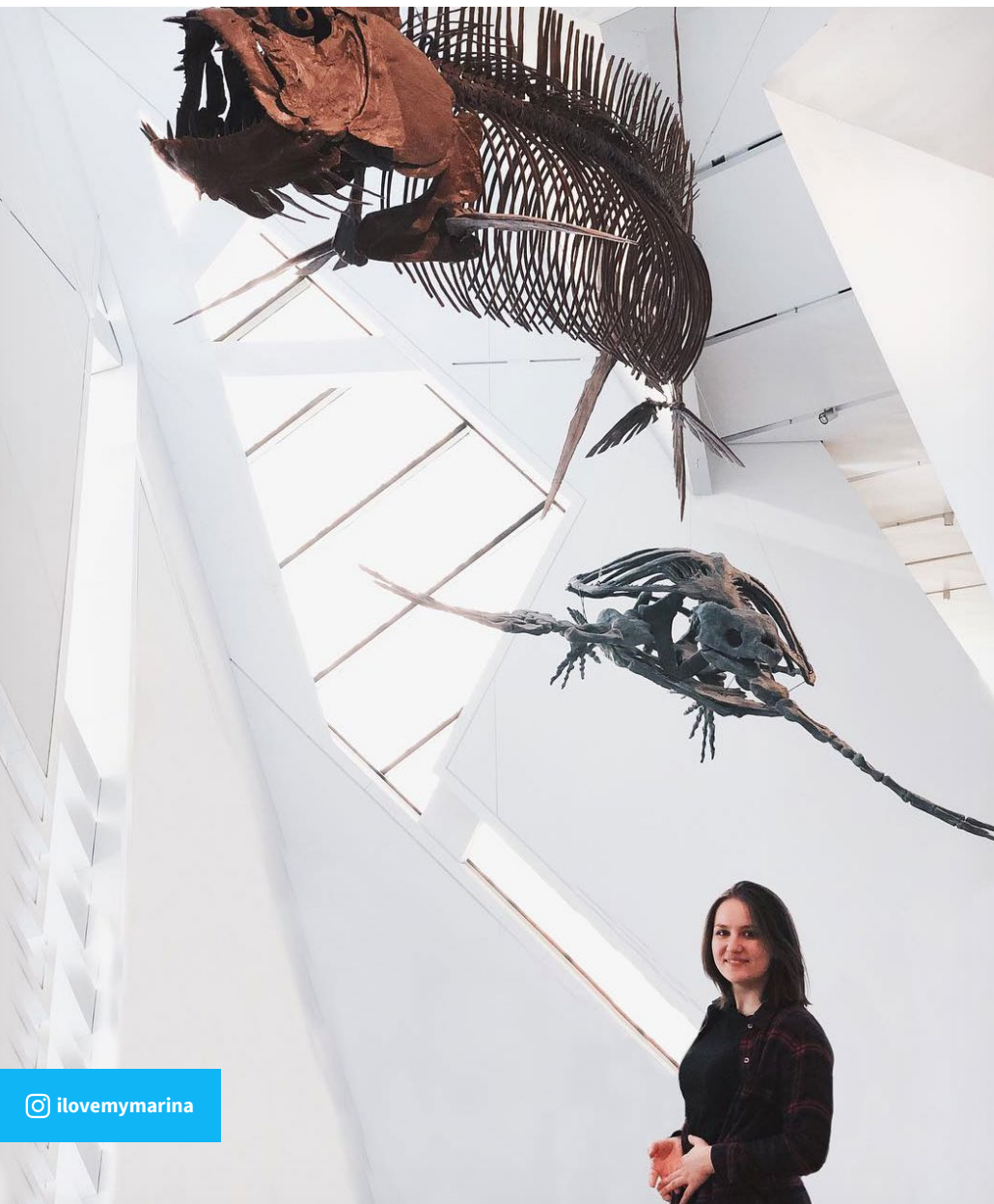
30
What file types are typically supported on a visual marketing platform like CrowdRiff?

A good visual marketing platform would usually support JPEG, PNG, TIF, JPG, MOV, MP4 and even GIFs!

Shri Jamadagni
Senior Customer Success Manager,
CrowdRiff

ilovemymarina

snaphappytravel

Publishing And Optimizing Visual Content

31
What are the top three things you think every travel brand should have on their website?

Showcase real people in images

Visitors spend 90 percent more time on your site when it includes UGC galleries[19]. It makes sense. If your website is full of stock photos, visitors aren't likely to think that your website is credible, because it's not believable.

Be mobile optimized

If your website isn't mobile friendly, that is the modern kiss of death—booking.com found that 80% of travel consumers prefer using mobile to get the information that they need. Additionally, if your website looks out of date and its design doesn't inspire, your visitors are more likely to bounce quickly[20].

Include CTAs to send people to your partners

If you have a beautiful hero image of a local resort, you should also have a caption or CTA for those interested in learning more about the property. This will ensure that you're getting as much value as possible out of your images, and will also make it easier to measure what is inspiring visitor inquiries and bookings. When planning the imagery for your CTA, consider that ads with UGC generate five times greater click-through rates[21].
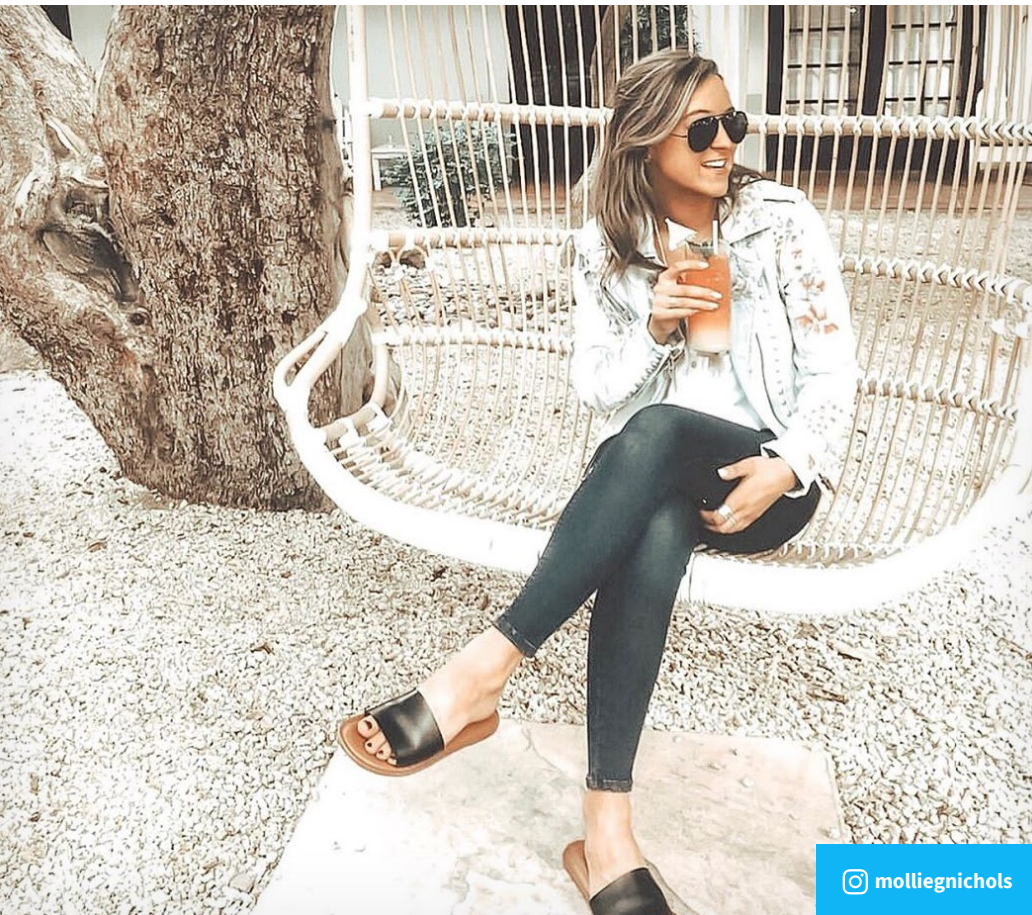
Bonus: Try a Chatbot

Did you know that 75% of people think it takes too long to reach a live agent[22]? Chatbots allow you to respond 24/7 and not send potential travelers somewhere else to get the information they're looking for.

Amrita Gurney
VP Marketing,
CrowdRiff

@ molliegnichols

[19]Source: Salesforce, 2016
[20]Source: Techradar, 2018
[21]Source: Salesforce, 2016
[22]Source: Helpscout

photosbyrosie

32
What are the different ways I can use visual content on my website?

1. Feature UGC in your blog, magazine or newsletter

2. Use UGC galleries on your website
   a. Cater to niche interests with targeted galleries
   b. Market to specific demographics

3. Drive action and bookings by adding CTAs to your visuals

4. Promote a photo or video contest on social media

5. Promote your local area or tourism partners with UGC

6. Give virtual tours of your property built with UGC

Courtney Malinas
Director, Sales,
CrowdRiff

33
How does UGC help improve my website performance?

UGC improves user engagement, and helps drive conversions. If the stats offered in question 31 weren't enough proof for you, consider how Visit Fairfax uses UGC to improve time on site. They saw an 85% improvement on their page for the Smithsonian Museum after incorporating UGC images.

That's because travel itself is an emotional experience. When you feature authentic visual content created by travellers, other travellers coming to that web page can relate. They will want to spend time browsing the images to gather inspiration for their own travels.

Lucas Luxton
Director, Tourism Partnerships, CrowdRiff

shridevij

> **"I'd rather have UGC of authentic photos taken than a homepage hero image that may or may not be photoshopped."**

Jake Sillavan
Visit Fort Worth

34

How can you know about a potential visitor's interests, so you can make your website more personalized to their needs?

Great question! As marketers, we're always looking for ways to make the experience more personalized, right? Without marketing automation, this can be difficult, but there are some elements you can embed into the design of your website so users can have their own self-directed journeys.

We love what Visit Singapore does on their homepage. There is a visual grid listing all the types of travelers: foodies, explorers, socialisers etc. Each of these im-ages links into a variety of pages and blog articles with relevant information, listings, and sug-gestions. This streamlined user experience ensures that there is content on the site that is useful to anyone wanting to plan a visit to Singapore.

Why should you care about the customer experience again? In the age of Netflix and Spotify, consumers expect personaliza-tion: 74% of consumers are frus-trated that web content doesn't map to their interests[23]. Your website is like your front door, and if consumers don't like what they see, they'll find what they're looking for somewhere else.

Julia Manoukian
Senior Content
Marketing Manager,
CrowdRiff
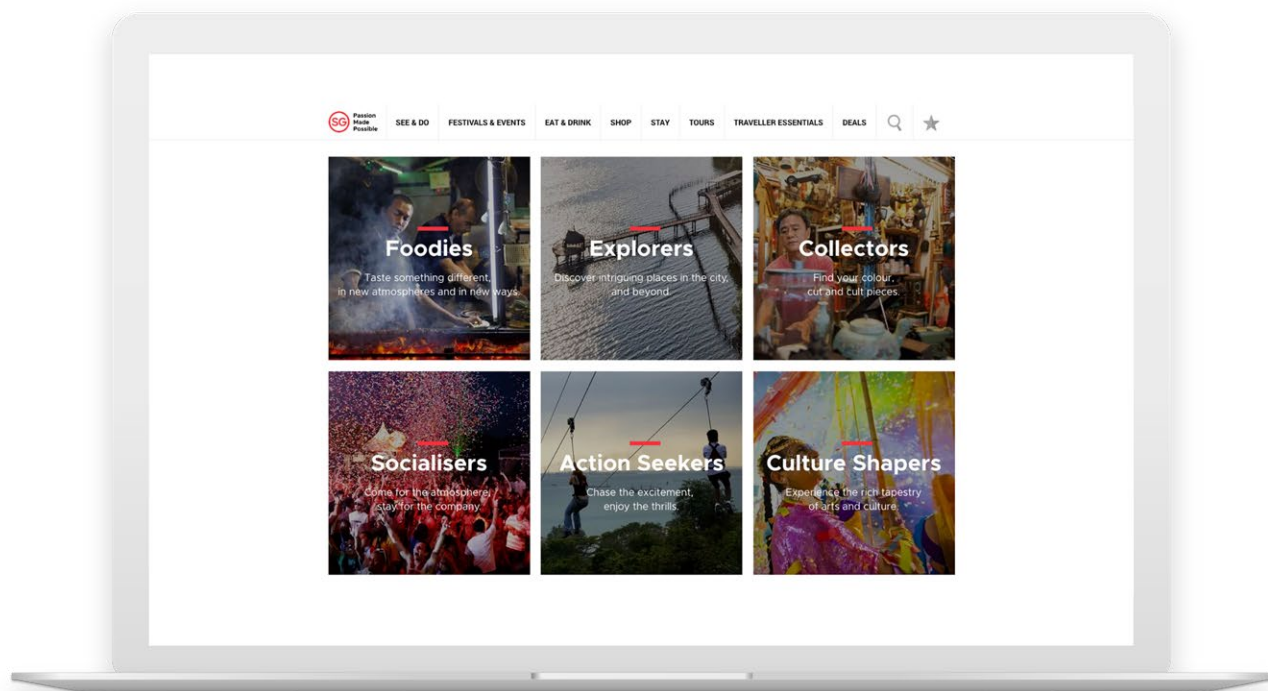
35
Would you recommend linking your CTAs to outside websites or just to internal pages on your website?

stephloureiro

It depends on your objectives. Most brands we work with have CTAs on their visuals that link deeper into their site, to a partner listing page or to a booking page. If you are mandated to drive traffic to partners, you may want to provide links to partner websites directly from the visual CTA.

Just be sure to set link parameters to open a new tab when linking off-site, so users don't bounce from the existing tab and stay on your page longer.

Adam Lacombe
Director, Demand Generation, CrowdRiff

We try to keep users on site as much as possible, of course, but there are times when it's appropriate to link off site. An example for us is linking to a city/county/state park's site if the info there is more informative than our own content.

Chad Hays
Senior Online Marketing Manager, Visit Phoenix

36
How can you satisfy your partners without having that "listing" style on your website? Is there a happy medium?

It's okay to have listings on your website, but DMOs see the best results when they make their listings a lot more interesting and dynamic.

Try offering visuals you know your visitors love. Experiment with editorial commentary. Tell me something more than "Joe's Pizza is a family owned business on highway 7." I can find that anywhere!

Amrita Gurney
VP Marketing, CrowdRiff

taliavane

It's not individual business listing pages that are the problem; it's the outdated emphasis on the OTA- and Yelp-like listing displays DMOs have on so many pages. It's been made clear at this point that people do not use DMO sites the way they use OTAs and Yelp, so why do we still insist on modeling these aspects of our sites like them?

I definitely believe it'd be possible to satisfy partners if DMOs got rid of these listing displays and pushed to individual business listings only via links in content and CTAs in UGC imagery. The keys to success would be having all departments in your organization educated and on board, then educating partners as to why our listings displays are outdated and unhelpful, and that we can provide more value to them with links in content and UGC.

Chad Hays
Senior Online Marketing Manager, Visit Phoenix
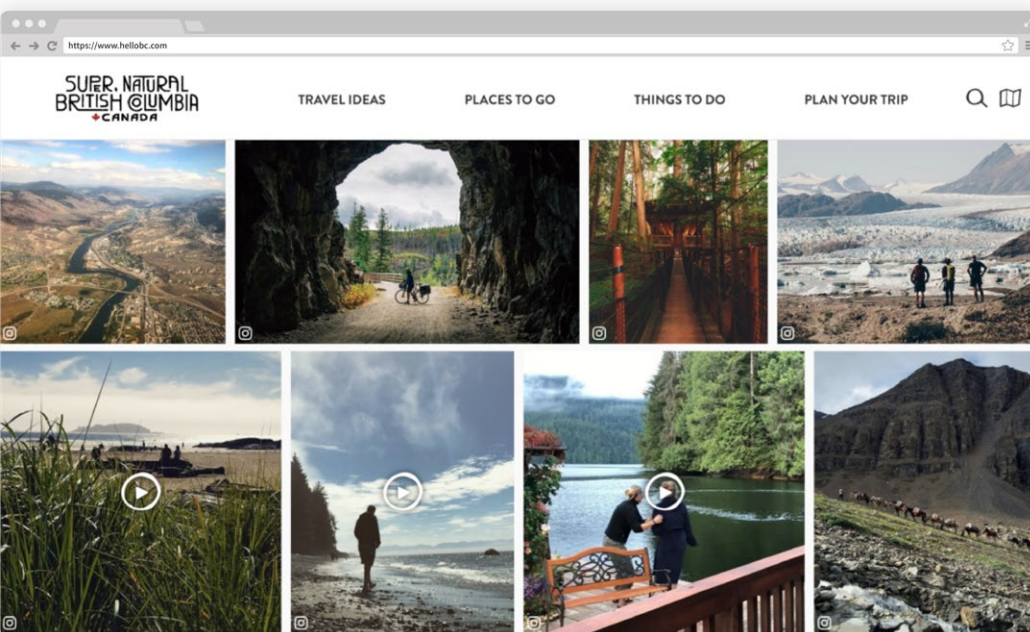
Should marketers address tragedies that have taken place in destinations they serve?

If so, how and when?

One of the benefits of UGC is that you can guide the perception and conversation around your brand, even when the media might be providing conflicting information. Here are some actionable ways you can use UGC to mitigate negative perceptions of your destination when disaster strikes.

Feature up-to-date UGC front and center on your website

Last year, British Columbia was struck with wildfires–something that can be a scary prospect for a traveler. During this time, to help keep people up-to-date on the situation, Destination BC updated their website galleries with real-time UGC from unaffected areas, to communicate that there was still a lot to explore.

When incorporating UGC onto your website, it's a good idea to emphasize authenticity and timeliness with language like "this week's top images" and "views from the ground." The key is to keep the content current by updating the images often–and conveying that.

Take control of the social conversation about your destination

When the wildfires hit Northern California last year, Visit Santa Rosa actively monitored what people were saying on social media once the fires were long gone.

Share UGC with the media and your partners

If you're already tracking and using UGC on social media and your website, you can extend the reach of your message by sharing it with the media and your tourism partners. Give the press something else to talk about. These authentic photos can spark new stories that can help spread the word that your destination is thriving again.

Dan Holowack
Co-Founder & CEO, CrowdRiff

> **"We took a proactive approach to mention and comment on UGC that mentioned our businesses that were open after the disaster, specifically including pictures that were taken after the disaster. It was very powerful to showcase and share content from visitors that featured our open businesses. This helped mitigate the impression that there was nothing left after the disaster or that everything was closed."**

Brad Calkins
Executive Director at Visit Santa Rosa

julia_koerner
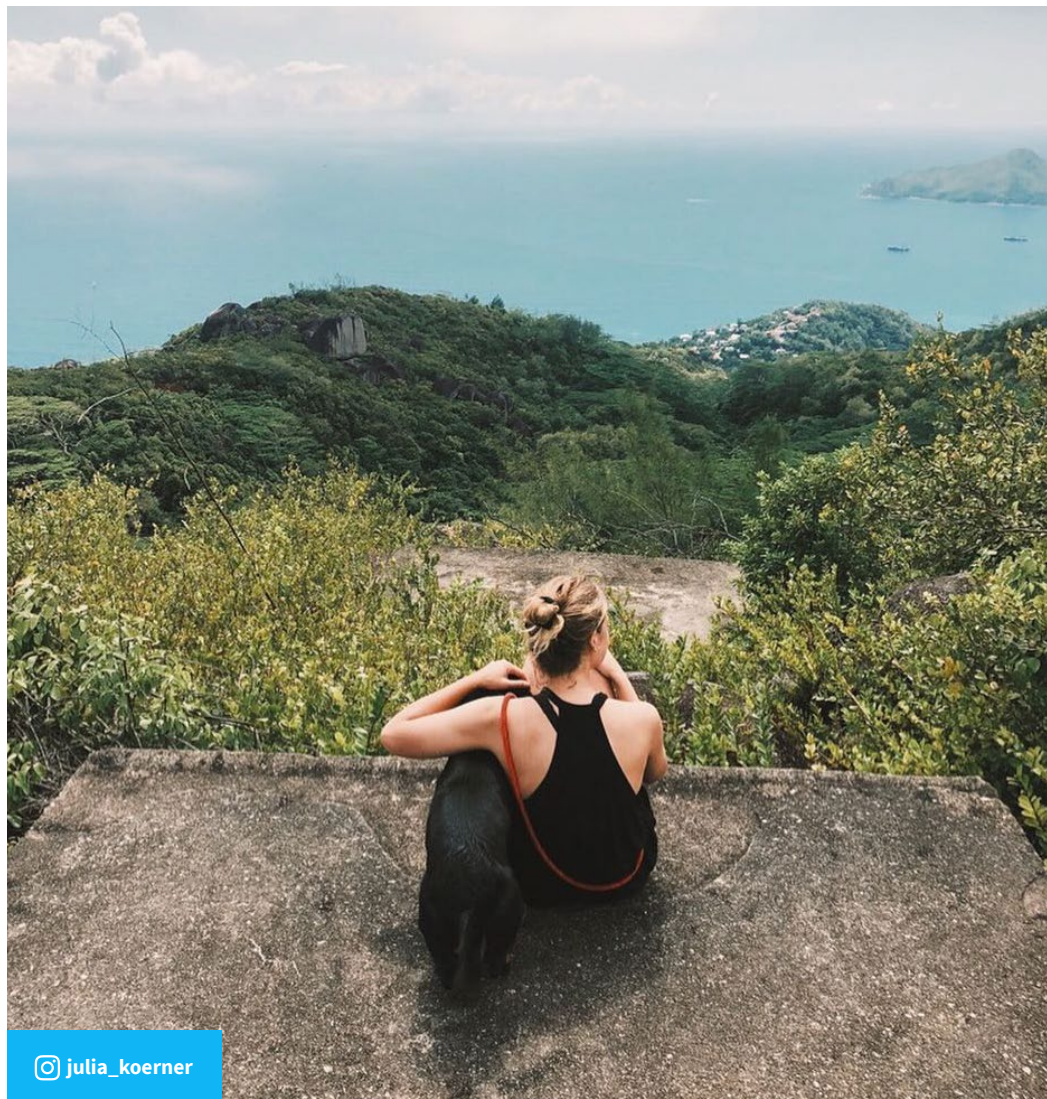
38

How can DMOs balance the needs of the users vs the partners/sponsors?

For example, something that might be very useful to a user might upset the politics of the website. Where should user experience be a priority?

At CrowdRiff, we always advocate to put the user first. In this case, if the user doesn't have a good experience, they will leave your website. It's really that simple.

We'd recommend that DMOs find ways to educate their partners or sponsors, so they don't have to compromise the user experience.

⊙ **jo__vo**

povfromme
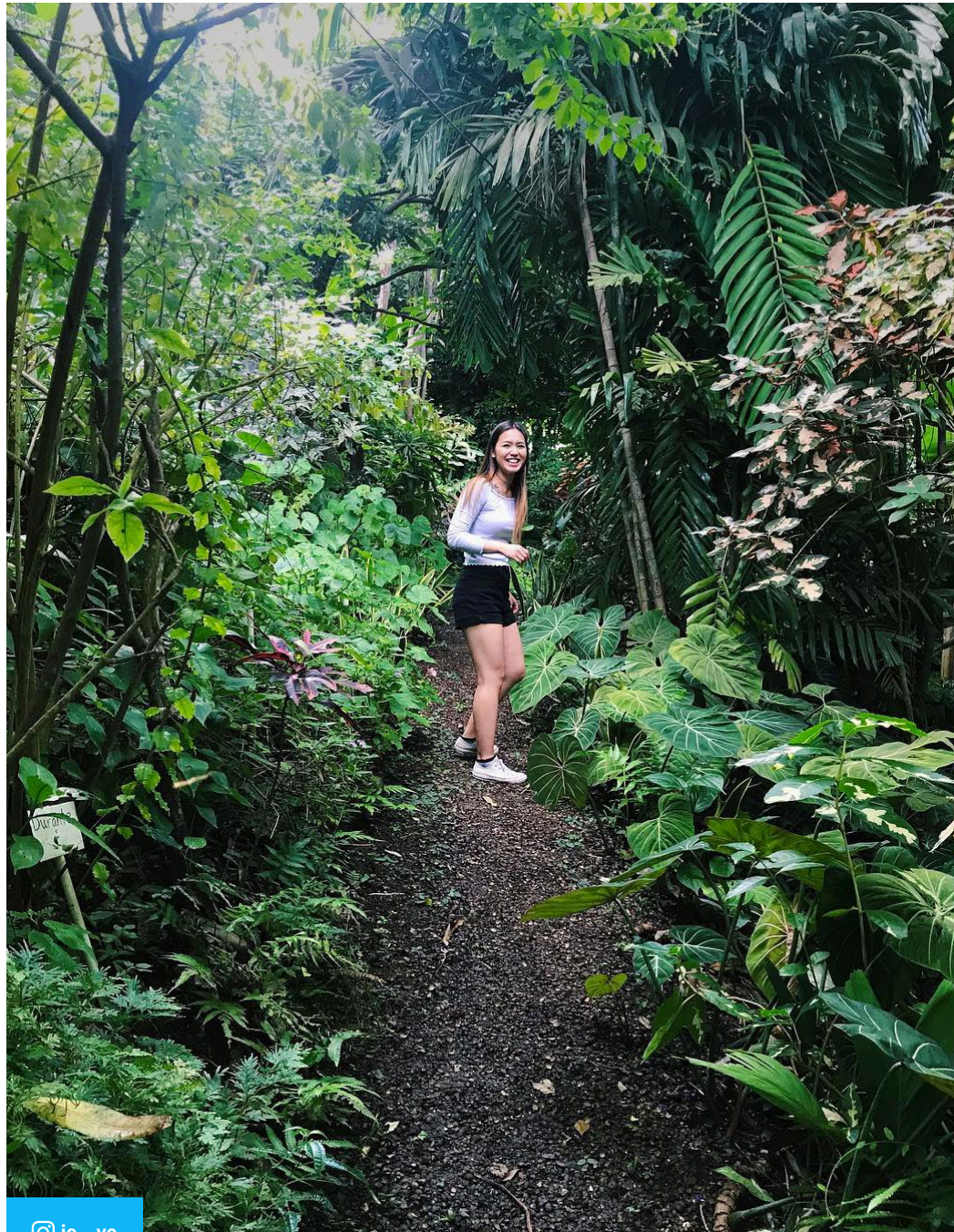
Say you wanted to post about the top five burger joints around town. Some DMOs might just pick the top 5 places their members are paying them for. But you're going to lose credibility in the user's eyes because TripAdvisor is telling them something completely different. Instead, you could list more restaurants and highlight your partners with an icon. Find a way to distinguish who your official partners are.

If you want some inspiration, we'd recommend checking out Visit Savannah.

Visit Savannah has done a beautiful job making their site feel like a digital magazine. The way their content is written evokes a sensory experience, rather than just delivering information. Even their sponsored content is written with the same care as the rest of their site copy, so it doesn't feel like an ad.

The takeaway for marketers here is to not compromise on the editorial quality of your publication for sponsored content or ads.

Adam Lacombe
Director, Demand Generation, CrowdRiff

The needs of potential visitors and the desires of partners can sometimes be at odds with each other, especially within a traditional partnership model. As DMOs, we maintain our relevance to users because we showcase the authenticity of our destinations, and it's essential to discover ways to do that while still fulfilling our partner's needs.

On our website, we maintain a balance of curated editorial content, paid partner listings, sponsored content, CrowdRiff assets from visitors and locals, and invite local guest bloggers to publish articles on our blog. I believe that we achieve authenticity by HOW we tell the story of our city, and nothing is as powerful as highlighting the experiences of our visitors and our locals - they tell our story for us.

Molly Burke Allwein
Senior Marketing and
Community Affairs Manager,
Visit Pittsburgh

emcapps
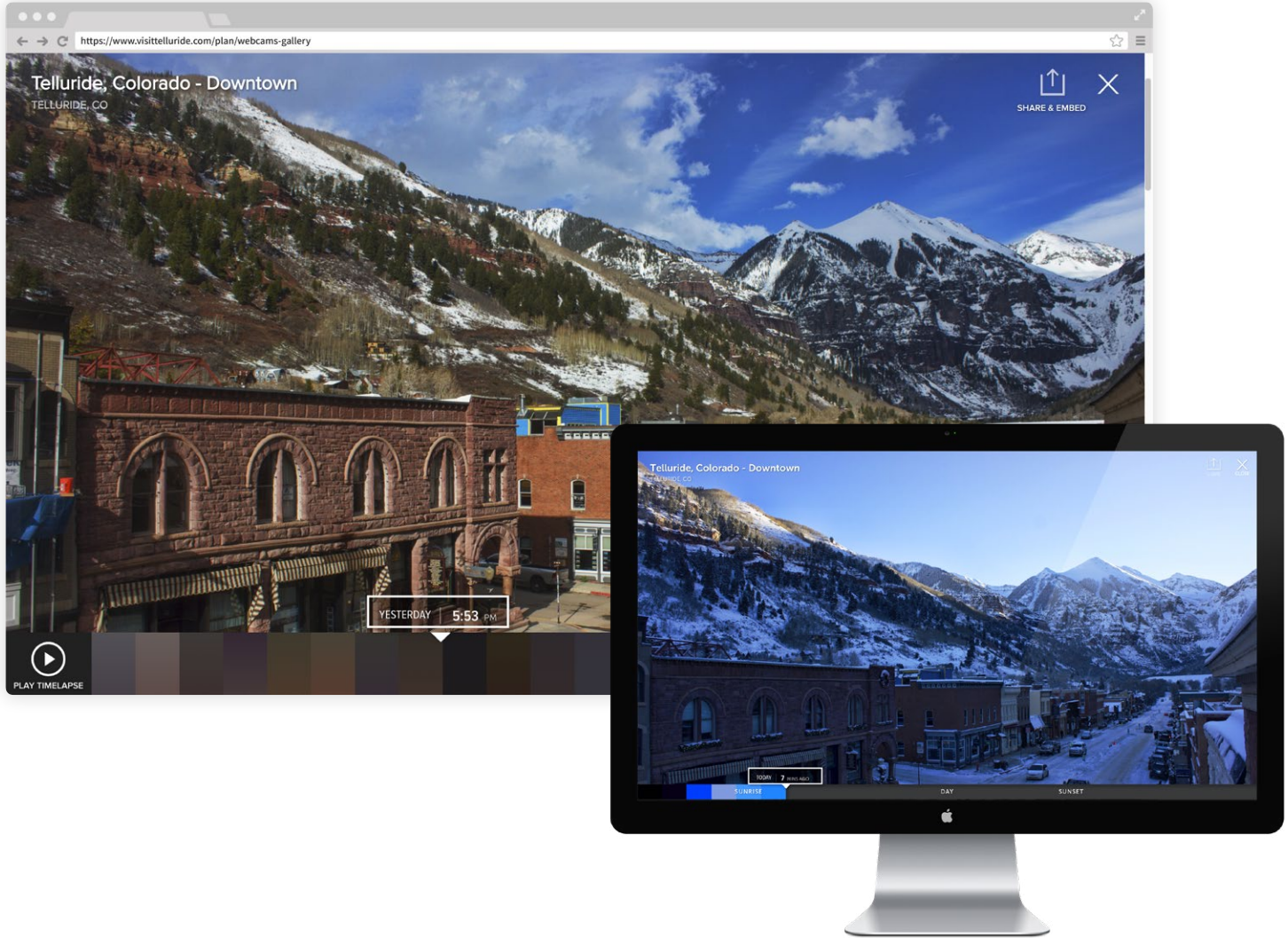
39
Do you see a lot of value in adding a live web cam to your website?

Live cams work best only for certain destinations. For visitors to a ski destination like Telluride, weather conditions are super important. Understanding this, a lot of DMOs will list their current temperatures on their website. However, Telluride takes this one step further, by providing a live feed of their destination, so that people can see what the weather is like in real-time. Their live cameras capture conditions on the mountains and also throughout town.

Adam Lacombe
Director, Demand Generation,
CrowdRiff

Considering A Platform for Your Visual Marketing

How does a visual marketing platform reduce my cost of operations?

There are two main ways that a visual marketing platform can help reduce your cost of operations.

Short term direct costs

As mentioned in **question 2**, a single professional photography shoot can cost up to $10,000. And for marketing videos, costs can range anywhere from $1,200 for a basic video and up to $50,000 for a premium video[24]. Depending on how often you plan shoots, your marketing costs could easily add up. There also may be hidden fees associated if you need to rebook with a photographer (think weather-related conditions, for example), get rights to photos, and pay additional staff such as actors, stylists, etc.

Another factor is the cost of your employees' time. Think about all the time marketers spend searching for visuals for the endless stream of content they need for social media, your website, and other marketing materials like visitor's guides.

Long term opportunity costs

One metric that brands often don't think about is the compounding effect that happens when the customer experience isn't optimized.

There is research that proves great customer experiences have a quantifiable impact. For transactional businesses (who care about return frequency and spend per visit), consumers who have great experiences spend 140 percent more than those who have poor experiences. For a sub-scription-based business (who focus on retention, cross-sell, and upsell), members who rate their experiences in the top two tiers have a 74 percent chance of still being a member after one year or more[25].

The takeaway? Travel and tourism brands who provide emotionally motivating experiences are not doing it by luck. The sooner you can invest in better customer engagement and experience, the sooner you can start seeing a return.

Jeffrey Trang
Sales Enablement Manager, CrowdRiff

stephloureiro

[24]Source: Lean Labs, 2015
[25]Source: HBR, 2014

41
What kind of analytics does a visual marketing platform like CrowdRiff usually track?

At CrowdRiff, here's a high level overview of what you can expect:

Gallery Insights:
Delivers performance data that helps you measure success and learn what's resonating with your audience.

Views:
The number of visitors that saw the gallery.

kat_leah_

Interactions:
A simple measure of overall action on a gallery. Any time a user performs one of the following actions, it's counted as an interaction:

- Load More button clicks

- Asset clicks (clicking an asset to view it in fullscreen mode)

- CTA clicks and fullscreen scrolling (pressing the left/right arrow keys to scroll through fullscreen photos)

Interactions refers to the sum total of these actions. For example, if a user clicks the Load More button, (1) then clicks a photo to view it in fullscreen mode (1), scrolls through 4 photos (4) then clicks a CTA on a photo (1), it's registered as 7 interactions.

Engagement rate:

A broad measure of a gallery's ability to generate interest, dividing overall interactions by total views.

- Engagement Rate = Interactions ÷ Views

Engagement rates can be greater than 100%. If, for example, 10 people viewed a gallery and each one had 6 interactions with it, the engagement rate would be 600%.

- 6 interactions x 10 views = 60 interactions

- 60 interactions ÷ 10 views = 600%

You can filter the data for any of these items by date range, data groupings or specific metrics.

beavalles

Asset Insights:

Provide a bottom-up view of performance to complement the top-down perspective provided.

With asset insights, you can see the top assets by engagement rates or clicks. This allows you to:

- Find content to feature in web ads, CTAs and other marketing collateral

- Discover what's resonating with your audience, helping you identify content trends and spur ideas

- Know what's not working, so you can optimize your content

Elise Taylor
Director of Customer Success, CrowdRiff

42
How can I convince my boss I need a visual marketing platform?

How do you get your boss to see the value of a visual marketing platform? If you want to educate them, you'll need to figure out what's holding them back.

Rather than "selling" a platform, examine your bosses pain points and educate them on what to look for in an ideal solution. Help them connect the dots, and show why it's worth the investment and how the platform provides value over time.

Understand the objectives of management and your company.

1. Create a case that aligns with their objectives.

2. Educate every member of the team.

Here's how to position a visual marketing platform internally.

Director of Marketing Objectives	How to Address Them
1. Attract visitors, increase bookings and maximize revenue 2. Enhance brand perception and improve engagement 3. Manage and react to the growing complexity of changing buyer behaviours, channels and technologies 4. Reduce friction in the consumer experience	A visual marketing platform can… 1. Enhance your reach, improve website and social performance (leading to more bookings) and stretch your budget (less on stock and commissioned photography) 2. Help tell an authentic brand story and better engage with your audience 3. Manage and react to the growing complexity of changing buyer behaviours, channels and technologies 4. Tap into an endless stream of popular, fresh content

Jeffrey Trang
Sales Enablement Manager,
CrowdRiff

vaneverdingen

43

How long should a visual marketing platform take to set up?

Depending on how many assets you have to transfer, setting up a visual marketing platform should take no longer than 10 working days.

Elise Taylor
Director of Customer Success,
CrowdRiff

⊙ **short_getaway**

44
Why can't I just use a free platform for this?

Based on the criteria above, we'd strongly recommend you weigh the pros and cons of a free service versus a platform like CrowdRiff. You might think you're saving more upfront, but consider the impact long term.

Think about questions like:

- Does the provider sympathize with the challenges I face day in and day out? Does the team have the know-how to provide insights into strategy and improving the way I operate?
- Does the tech automate or make my life easier, or will the opposite happen? Will the platform actually help me reach my goals?
- Do I just want technology, or do I want a partner to help me grow?

Be aware that feature by feature comparisons are potentially flawed ways of evaluating vendors, because anyone can say they look good on paper. Instead, consider things like total cost of ownership and the overall user experience (less "can they do it on paper" and more "how does this solution do it?").

Jeffrey Trang
Sales Enablement Manager,
CrowdRiff

45

How do I choose the best visual marketing platform?

Working with 600+ travel and tourism brands now, we often find that many of our customers struggle when it comes to evaluating technology. Understandably so, especially when every vendor today providing SaaS seems to be able to do everything on paper. So, how do you get around some of these smoky mirrors when you evaluate technology?

Use these questions to identify and evaluate the capabilities of a visual marketing platform under consideration.

Security

- Is this provider compliant?

- Do they have a track record of being honest and up to date with regulations and technology trends?

- Do they have anything to show for it?

Adoption

- Is the user interface simple?

- Is it intuitive?

- Will my team be able to use it?

- If I didn't have any training, can I figure it out on my own?

taliavane

Scalability

- As a partner, does your vendor provide a clear path of what your partnership looks like as you grow?

- Do they limit the functionality as your team grows?

- Do they charge you when you need more content?

- When you need bandwidth most, do they slow you down or do they continue to innovate and provide additional functionality?

Support

- Does this vendor work with many of my peers?

- Do they understand my business?

- Do they have a track record of customer success?

Implementation

- Are there implementation fees?

- How long does it typically take to get your system set up?

- What does the onboarding process look like and how long does that take?

- How quickly will I see value from my investment?

Jeffrey Trang
Sales Enablement Manager,
CrowdRiff

maya_ess

aloysiusefraim

Questions That Made Us Laugh

46
The weatherman is not a friend of tourism.

Was there a question in there? We're sorry to hear the weather hasn't been on your side.

47
The socks are cool. May I get a walk thru?

We think so too! You can get a free "walk thru" **here.**

48
Can I buy those socks?? I must have!

We regret to inform you that our socks are not currently available for purchase.

If you **go through a demo** with our team, we'll make sure your feet are warm this winter. 😉

49
Can you at one point slowly go over how to add an emoji from a computer?

On a Mac, you can use the keyboard shortcut "Command + Control + Spacebar" to access emojis. ✈️

50

I'm not familiar with CrowdRiff... who are you?

Glad you asked!

CrowdRiff is an AI-powered visual content marketing platform that enables marketers to discover, collaborate on, and deliver top-performing visuals across every channel. Travel and tourism companies, large and small, from across the globe use CrowdRiff to:

- Source and acquire rights to guest photos from social channels.

- Replace their legacy digital asset manager to organize and manage both professional and UGC photos and videos in one central platform.

- Deliver high performing visual content across their website, social channels, print materials, digital ads and more.

Discover the most engaging social media photos from your visitors.

We work with 600+ leading travel and tourism brands worldwide.

GREAT LAKE TAUPŌ   HORNBLOWER CRUISES & EVENTS   Jordan   lonely planet   Zürich, Switzerland.

See how CrowdRiff can help you increase time on site by 4x, decrease bounce rates by 30%, and reduce the time you spend searching for visuals by as much as 90%.

Get a free demo