



TREKKSOFT

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**SOCIAL MEDIA
INTEGRATION GUIDE**

for tour & activity providers



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There is no better platform for promoting tours & activities than social media



If you are reading this you are most likely the owner of a tour and activity company. Congratulations – you are the driving force behind leisure travel. And you're lucky, there has never been a more perfect match than your products and social media marketing. You have at your fingertips the most powerful selling tool ever made – and most of it is free to use. All you need to do is get out there and start.

In the pages that follow we have condensed the experience of hundreds of TrekkSoft companies into 20 easy steps you can take to turn every one of your customers into a brand ambassador for your trips and tours.

You work hard to make sure your guests have the experience of a lifetime, now get out there and start helping them spread the word about how awesome your company is!

INTEGRATING SOCIAL MEDIA INTO YOUR TOURS & ACTIVITIES



What is the point of all this?

One thing people like to brag about are their holidays. They like to tell people they've pushed themselves to the limit to climb Machu Picchu, they've conquered their fear of heights by skydiving in Australia or they've got their adrenalin pumping by zip-lining their way through the Alps.

Thanks to social media, they don't need to wait until they return from the trip to brag about it. Once they're connected to the internet they can talk about it there and then.

The more you integrate social media into your company the easier you make it for your customers to spread the word!

What hashtag should I use?

Keep it short. Tweets can only have 140 characters so you want people to have enough room to talk about what they're doing. **Make it relevant** – don't have anything too cryptic. If you can, make it conversational. **Make sure nobody else is using it** for reporting and tracking purposes.



#1

Have your own hashtag

Every business should have their own hashtag. Whether it's a restaurant, design agency or financial institution, you should be able to track every conversation that takes place online about what you do.

Get your customers engaged from the start. When you're operating your tour or activity and you're giving your intro, some housekeeping, and other bits of vital information, give them a hashtag. Finish off your welcome with '...and finally, if anybody will be tweeting, instagramming or anything else during the tour, please use our hashtag #yourhashtag.'

#2

Share content live from your tours

One question many business and brands ask themselves when it comes to social media is 'what will I share?' This is a challenge that tour and activity companies don't tend to face – the images, tips and updates are staring them in the face on a daily basis...they just need to remember to share them. When your guides are on tour, make sure they're sharing content and using that hashtag we just spoke about.



#3

Ask customers for their Twitter handles

To get your content shared by others you need to grab their attention. There are different ways to make this happen. One is by having extremely engaging content. Another is by tagging relevant users in tweets. When you're on your tour, ask your customers if they're on Twitter, then ask them for their Twitter handles. After that, have some fun! Take selfies strategically with those on Twitter and tag them in the tweet with the picture, thus encouraging as many retweets as possible. Take photos of the users in front of landmarks and tweet them. There's really a lot you can do.



#4

Encourage them to use your Twitter handle

As well as asking your customers for their Twitter handle, share your own with them. This will increase the chances of others tagging your business in tweets, thus increasing your chance of reaching a wider audience.

#5

Offer prizes for the most creative tweets or photos

Just because you tell people to use your hashtag in tweets or Instagram photos doesn't mean they'll actually share content. Sometimes you need to incentivise people. A way to do this is by offering prizes for the most creative or funniest tweets or Instagram photo. To track the content make sure people are using your hashtag.

**Get your
guide team
involved and
on board**

Make sure your social media goals and plan are understood throughout the entire company. Your guides are your most important asset. To encourage them to go the extra mile by posing for pictures and bringing across the message, try offering internal incentives and bonuses for the most customer engagement.



#6

Ask people to follow you

It might seem obvious, but not many companies openly ask their customers to follow or like them on social media. They think it's a little bit desperate. But if people are willing to part with their money to experience what you have to offer, surely they'll part with nothing to see your regular updates.

#7

Create a video from customer footage

Have you ever heard of a movie called 'Awesome! I F*@kin' Shot That' by the Beastie Boys? It's an entire movie created from footage shot by fans who attended their concerts. Now I'm not suggesting you create a movie from customer footage, but you might find enough footage on YouTube, Instagram and Vine to create a short promo.

What makes great content?

- People – everyone likes to see themselves in a postcard
- Live updates
- Live video testimonials
- Funny quotes and questions
- Respectful bloopers



#8

Feed content to your site on a “Live Blog”

With a bit of tech work on your website and a stream of content on your hashtag, you can have new content constantly fed to your website by way of a ‘live blog’. This way there’s always relevant, up to date content on your website.

#9

Provide customers with a camera

A lot of the tips I’m providing are dependent on UGC

– User Generated Content. To generate UGC your customers need to have a good camera or charged smartphone with them. But maybe they won’t. To make sure you don’t encounter this problem, provide them with a camera that will take good photos and/or shoot HD videos.





#10

Tell them their photos will be posted

People get a kick out of seeing themselves on social networks. Most people anyway. If you're taking photos of your tours, try and get photos of people. Then share them on your social networks, telling the people in them that you're doing so. This will encourage them to share the photos, thus bringing your business to a wider audience.



A good example of a website doing this

TravelMassive.com. Scroll down the homepage to see the stream of #travelmassive hashtag. Another example is travel blog **Travmonkey.com** which has live blogs from different trips.



#11

Curate content on your social channels

There are so many social networks these days that it's tough being active on all of them. By having your own hashtag and encouraging others to share content for you (kind of), there's a constant stream of content for your company. You could have a Facebook photo album of in-house photos, others of photos created by others, or Pinterest boards using images shared with your hashtag.

#12

Crowdsource for info... but don't undermine yourself

Once upon a time, if people wanted to know what a hotel or hostel was like, they'd turn to Lonely Planet or another travel guide. Those days are almost gone because we now want recommendations from our peers. As a result, websites like TripAdvisor are becoming increasingly popular.

The point I'm making here is that UGC (User Generated Content) is sometimes more valuable than professionally produced content. As a result, crowdsource for content: ask people for their top travel tips, put them into one piece of content, and publish this on your site before feeding it into your social channels.



#13

Do a live Google Hangout from your tour

You may have heard the statistic that YouTube is the second biggest search engine on the internet. With this in mind, having a presence there is very important. Creating videos can be slightly arduous though, and loading different shots into video editing software and creating a video takes time. But using Google Hangouts, an app that is available for iOS and Android, you can create short, live Google Hangouts from the tours, meaning your YouTube channel has constant content. Afterwards you can tailor the content specifically for SEO (search engine optimization).

#14

Show the people behind the tour

If people really, really love your tour it will because of one (or both) of two things – the location/activity or the people leading. Your guides are a product just like your tour is. Make sure to showcase them across all of your social channels because people love to see the faces behind the (sometimes) faceless brands.

Make sure any live hangout is an addition to the experience, not an intrusion

If you plan to do a live hangout on a tour, make sure your guests are on board and excited with the idea. If your tour isn't suitable for a live hangout with guests, try staging it with some actors for a similar effect.



#15

Get feedback from your customers and use their quotes as content

Nobody likes to listen to self-praise too much, but if your customers are saying nice things about you, you might as well let others know. A testimonials page is a great place to do this...social media is too. At the end of your tours ask your customer for feedback, then share them as quotes across your social channels.

#16

Experiment with other social networks

Too many companies using social media fall into the trap of only utilizing two networks – Facebook and Twitter. But there are more out there that your customers are using: many of them are guaranteed to be on Instagram, for instance. If you're a pub crawl that targets young Americans, chances are they're on Snapchat. If they are, then your company needs to be there too.





#17

Monitor other search terms

I mentioned before that every tour and activity company should have their own hashtag. But not everybody will get that hashtag right. For instance, if TrekkSoft was running a tour and we wanted to see what people were saying about us on social networks, as well as #TrekkSoft, we'd need to monitor TrekkSoft (without the hashtag), TrekSoft, Trekk Soft, Trek Soft etc. Make sure you're checking for spelling variations of your company to track every last conversation.



#18

Have your social info on your t-shirts

People who lead tour groups are generally known as guides. Guides lead people, which means at some stage all or some of the people in the group are going to be behind the group leader. This is a great opportunity to get all your customers liking your different networks by adding your usernames to the back of all guides' t-shirts.



#19

Turn on the location for your social media postings

Instagram has a great feature that allows customers to add their photos to a larger “photo map” and name the location where the photo was taken. This is a great way to see what customers enjoy about your tour and allows you to attract people who are researching a specific destination on Instagram.



Prime real-estate to tactfully tell customers about your social media message.

Your guests spend a lot of time looking at your guides. Subtle social media messaging on staff t-shirts and uniforms are a great way of making sure people know your hashtag and brand.



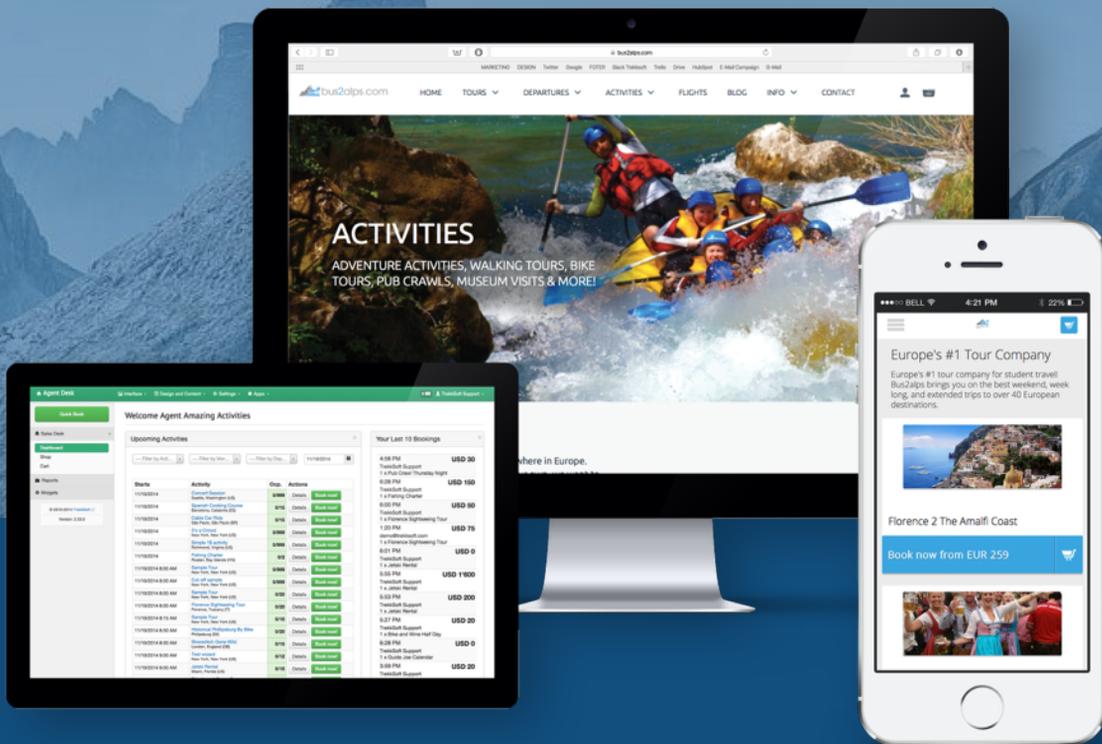
#20

Have fun with it!

Social media was created to share personal stories and good times with friends and family. These platforms are usually regarded as less formal and more personal. Show your fun and silly side, and don't be afraid to bring a positive voice and personality to your brand.

We hope you found this ebook useful. Don't forget, it doesn't make sense to drive lots of traffic to your website if people can't book. Investing time in improving your social media will deliver the best results if you have an awesome online booking engine on your website.

For more industry-specific discussions with other tour operators around the world and our online booking specialists, take a look at blog.trekkssoft.com



**CREATE
YOUR OWN
BOOKING WEBSITE**
with just a few clicks!