INFLUENCERS AS PROMOTERS OF TOURISM
What new trends brings influencer marketing to the tourism sector this year? What are the reasons why companies choose influencers for their marketing and communications initiatives? Are these the same reasons why their “followers” follow them? How is its efficiency measured?

Although influencer marketing has been positioned around the world to impact millions of users on social networks and blogs, it is still a challenge for companies in the tourism sector to design a strategy of influencers and measure the real impact of their campaigns.

Axon Marketing & Communications highlights the most important findings and conclusions about the opportunities and challenges that companies in the tourism sector will face in 2019, based on the analysis of the responses given by the attendees of ANATO, one of the most important tourism fairs in Latin America.
Influencer marketing trends in the tourism sector for 2019

For some years, the inclusion of influencers as part of a communication and marketing strategy has become more common and necessary for the promotion of a destination, airline or hotel group. This has been generated due to important factors such as trust, which has been the best ally of influencers: in most cases people give higher levels of credibility to what is said and done by instagramers, youtubers, bloggers, twitterers, etc.

Axon Marketing & Communications conducted a survey to 100 users of tourism services and 50 destination promotion agencies, travel agencies, hotels and airlines in order to identify the existing opportunities in relation to the influencer marketing in the tourism sector for 2019. The results: Although influencer marketing is a tool used in the sector, its development must be oriented towards the creation of content marketing and conversion.
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Influencer marketing trends in the tourism sector for 2019

INFLUENCERS IN THE PURCHASE DECISION

THE IMPACT OF INFLUENCERS IS INCREASING IN THE PURCHASE DECISION OF TRAVELERS

It is a fact that travelers seek information on social networks and blogs from influencers, forums and online communities in order to make purchasing decisions. According to the data collected on this survey, the impact level of influencers in the buying decision-making process of a tourist destination, hotels, airline services, and travel agencies is HIGH.

In addition, more than 85% of users follow at least 3 travel, fashion, and / or lifestyle influencers. This fact highlights the need to include more than one influencer in the communication strategy of a tourism brand in order to accelerate the purchasing decision of consumers.

“Percentage of users who base their purchase decision on influencers”

- **80%**
  - Tourist destination

- **75%**
  - Hotels and airlines

- **71%**
  - Travel agencies
Influencer marketing trends in the tourism sector for 2019

82% of tourism services users follow social networks, travel blogs, fashion and/or lifestyle influencers.

85% follow a minimum of 3 influencers.

Tourism sector companies must understand that the impact of an influencer (instagramers, twitters, youtubers, snapchaters, bloggers and similar) within their strategy begins at the moment of choosing it properly. Selecting the wrong influencer could have an extremely negative impact on the image and reputation of the brand. Remember to include more than one influencer in your communication strategy.

The next step in the process of choosing an influencer is the design of a communication plan that includes specific objectives in your consumer’s purchasing behavior. Here are some ideas you can implement in order to obtain good results:

1. **Interview with the influencers:** Developing interviews with each influencer will lead to the creation of original content for your audiences. In the same way, this will encourage conversations and interactions around the brand (reactions, comments, likes, shared publications, inbox, etc).

2. **Attendance at events:** Take your influencers to events and tourist fairs and make them your brand ambassadors. Invite them to socialize with the attendees and share these face-to-face interactions on their social profiles through comments and photos that reflect the values of your brand.

3. **Website or blog contents:** In addition to the key messages on the social networks of your influencers, agree to the creation of collaborative content on your website or blog. You can also include videos, testimonials, webinars, etc.
Influencer marketing trends in the tourism sector for 2019

**MOTIVATION TO CHOOSE AN INFLUENCER**

**CONSUMERS AND BRANDS HAVE DIFFERENT MOTIVATIONS WHEN CHOOSING AN INFLUENCER**

75% of users who follow influencers do it mainly because of the specialized content they share on their social networks or blogs about travel, lifestyle and fashion. While 60% of the organizations in the tourism sector, choose an influencer in their communication strategy with the objective of representing the values and attributes of the brand.

One of the paradoxes of this discovery is that organizations of the tourism sector stated that the main reasons to work with influencers are the number of interactions such as likes, and comments (40%) and the number of followers (35%) they have; leaving aside the quality of the content that the influencer publishes.

"Users motivations to follow a travel, fashion and/or lifestyle influencer"

Motivations by which the organizations of the tourist sector choose an influencer for their strategy (*)

1. Specialized content: 75%
2. News and trends: 23%
3. Number of followers: 2%

(*) The respondents chose more than one option

**WHAT TO DO?**

- **Followers confirm it: content marketing and influencers go hand in hand.** The quality of the content turns out to be more relevant than the number of followers. Brands must take advantage of this and understand that Influencers can become the ideal channel to spread marketing content about travel, fashion and/or lifestyle trends.

- **It is not just that the influencer publishes a message created by himself or by the destination, hotel or airline.** It is important to bear in mind that once the communication plan that includes the number of publications has been defined, the brand and the influencer must create the content and define how this one would be said.

This point must be carried out jointly because the influencer knows its audiences and knows how to connect with them, while the organization knows the values and attributes of its brand. In this way, the knowledge and experience of both parties will be an advantage.
The success of an influencer’s strategy lies mainly in the quality of its contents.

The main reason why users stop following influencers in social networks is the lack of quality in the content they publish (75%). Only 10% say they would “unfollow” their influencers because of the lack of frequency in their publications or the intensity in the number of publications, and less than 3% because they do not have a high number of followers.

Let’s remember that, in the previous findings, the second reason for an organization in the tourism sector to choose an influencer was the number of interactions (likes, comments and responses of the influencer to its followers) (40%) and the number of followers (35%). In this sense, companies of the tourist sector must take into account the quality of the content and the knowledge that an influencer provides on a certain topic. For users, the number of followers or interactions is irrelevant, while the content is essential.

Reasons why users would stop following an influencer

- Due to low quality content (75%)
- Due to intensity (14%)
- Due to low frequency (10%)
- Due to few followers (1%)

What to do?

- When establishing a content marketing campaign with an influencer, do not fall into the mistake of just creating one post for your social networks or blogs. It is important to avoid the same post on all social media channels.
- The visual nature of tourism marketing is ideal to create “moments” through photographs, stories and direct messages on Instagram. Consider Twitter and Facebook as auxiliary channels. Remember that the description of your brand is as important as the choice of influencers. The consumer looks for good content and not advertising disguised as content.
- Include marketing content through new multimedia formats, such as “How to” tips and articles, images, gifs, infographics, videos, testimonials, presentations, webinars, and even surveys.
“AWARENESS” IS NO LONGER THE ONLY INDICATOR TO MEASURE THE ACTIONS WITH INFLUENCERS. THE NEXT LEVEL IS “CONVERSION”!

Understanding awareness as reach, users, visits of content, reproductions, and conversion as the number of users that the influencer leads to an external platform (number of clicks on the website) is extremely important. The most relevant indicators to measure the effectiveness of the actions of influencers by companies in the tourism sector are associated with sales (48%) and visits to their website (42%).

Indicators that companies in the tourism sector take into account to measure the effectiveness of actions with influencers (*):

- 48% Indicators associated with commercial prospecting or sale
- 42% Increase of website visits
- 38% Increase of followers in their social networks
- 22% Mentions in the social networks of the influencer
- 24% Shared content from the social network of the influencers

(*) The respondents chose more than one option

WHAT TO DO?

- It is necessary to break with the myth that influencer marketing only contributes with positioning initiatives. Brands need to go one step further. If the content is what the followers of the influencer value most, the brands must expect to get the influencers’ conversion.
- Remember that the influencers’ commercial potential lies in their ability to influence, convince and transmit credibility to their followers. If a destination, airline or hotel gets an influencer to recommend its brand, this will probably enhance its knowledge and positioning and, as a result, increase your sales.

However, we can not leave this objective as a natural consequence of the strategy. It is necessary to clearly define the objectives, the target we are focusing on and the KPIs in order to measure the efficiency of the strategy.

- Some indicators associated with conversion and recommended to measure a campaign with influencers are:
  - Number of visits to your website or blog (this can be seen thanks to Google Analytics)
  - Number of followers in their social networks (before and after implementing the strategy)
  - Indicators associated with commercial prospecting such as purchases or records of databases.
By 2019, 42% of the organizations and companies in the tourism sector will allocate a maximum of 20% of their annual budget in influencer marketing. However, 26% still do not know if they will invest in this aspect. This reveals that there are still opportunities for professionals in communications and marketing in order to measure and interpret the investment return in actions with influencers, and this goes beyond followers or shared content.

Remember that companies in this sector consider less relevant the number of mentions in social networks or shared content when measuring the effectiveness of their strategies.

Percentage of annual sales that will be invested in strategies with influencers in 2019

WHAT TO DO?

• Do not see the influencers marketing as an isolated action, frame it within a strategy and include it within the global communication plan. This allows you to manage the budget assigned to influencers as an item within the strategy.

• Do not limit yourself to offering a monetary payment for working with influencers. Offer them experiences through travel, events, exchanges or free hosting, which go beyond monetary interests. In addition, inviting them to create content is a win-to-win strategy that will place the brand and the influencer.

• Influencer marketing in the tourism sector is a trend that has come to stay and is in the field of brands to provide the professionalization of services. There is no written rule about how much to invest in this strategy; However, data from communication specialists point to the fact that the ROI in influencers’ marketing is 11 times greater than in traditional digital marketing methods.

The above happens because influencer marketing is more authentic and has more engagement. It is advisable to measure the ROI of the strategy in order to comply with the raised KPIs, this will be the starting point to define the budget of the following campaigns.
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AXON MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

We manage the reputation, drive brands and generate high impact results, through Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) strategies, in which the strategic relationship, high-level content marketing and a model of indicators or KPI’s are the backbone.

We know in depth the dynamics of the tourism and foreign trade sector! This is the competitive advantage that allows us to provide a comprehensive communication and marketing approach to generate high impact results.

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