



**Travel Commerce 2017 Trends:  
Discover Your Customers Through  
Personalization!**



**DIGITAL TRAVEL  
SUMMIT**



## Travel and the eCommerce Revolution!

The internet completely transformed the travel industry. Think back to just two decades ago, when you had to go through a travel agency to book a trip or (gasp!) pick up a phone. The internet opened a door for airlines, hotels, and other travel players to sell directly to customers. They could now feature their perks and rates directly to the customer—but the customer could also now shop around, compare all the costs and advantages.

Further adding to the evolution of online travel was the rise of Online Travel Agencies (OTAs). For years now, travelers have been drawn to online sites like Expedia, Travelocity, Orbitz and Priceline to find and reserve hotel rooms, flights and rental cars. Hotels and travel providers welcomed the system — or at least learned to live with it — even though the business came at the cost of substantial commissions. But now, the travel industry is fighting back and investing heavily in getting customers to skip the OTA and book directly on their site.

Southwest for instance has only ever allowed travelers to book directly on their website, and now more airlines are following suit.

**Companies are investing billions of dollars in the next wave of travel eCommerce, from revamping Web sites to changing the technology infrastructure.**

Travel operators, aggregators and service providers are anxiously searching for the industry's next big thing. At the moment, personalization is looking like the clear winner. Companies are investing time and money in to getting to know their customers on a deeper, more personal level so that they can target appropriately. They want to provide targeted content at every touch point in the customer journey, from pre-search, to booking and more. While doing so, companies have strived to reduce channel costs, be efficient and collect data to ultimately be ready when the customer is looking to buy.



“The show was an intimate setting with meaningful discussions, leading-edge solutions and thought leaders in the travel industry- a refreshing change from the mega show concept.”

Michael Weiss, Director, Online Retail, Global Operations, Marriott International

## Where is the Industry Headed?



### Getting to know the digital traveler

Travel brands are changing their business to focus first and foremost on the customer. But first, their need to have a clear picture of WHO that traveler is and how they can meet their unique needs for optimized search, booking patterns and loyalty at every touch-point in the customer journey. There are a number of different subsets - from Millennials to the corporate traveler, etc. Bottom line, knowing the traveler gives brands the advantage for better personalization.



### Advancements in search, display and SEO

Companies want to be at the top of search, and they're focused on enhancing keywords to win the booking.



### Impact of distribution based on changing landscapes

Mergers and Acquisitions are at the forefront of the industry. Priceline and Expedia have each bought up many of the smaller-brand OTAs and they are fighting to rule the scene. Marriott and Starwood are in the process of consolidating, and American Airlines recently bought U.S. Airways. As

these companies merge, marketers are tasked with streamlining digital platforms as well as company cultures. This can impact the industry in several ways, including price goes up because of less competition.



### Digital Innovations in the in-trip Experience

Companies are extending their outreach into the in-trip experience with the use of mobile and social platforms to help drive better engagement. These little details often surprise and delight the customer.



### Converting Customers into brand cheerleaders through post-trip touch-points

The trip is over; the journey has ended. Right? Wrong! Post-trip is a critical touch-point in the customer journey and an ideal opportunity for continued engagement. With the experience still fresh in the traveler's mind, travel operators can take advantage of this moment in order to ensure the customer keeps their brand in mind when it comes time to plan to next trip. Day 3 brings us full circle, touching on important topics such as, measuring the customer experience, post-trip engagement, social and content marketing, and using data to understand the traveler.

## Here's what you need to know...

- **Personalization** at every touch point drives greater customer loyalty.
- Get to the top of **search with enhanced keywords** to win the booking!
- Develop a mobile strategy that **facilitates the in-trip experience**.
- Use social to **drive customer loyalty** and engagement.
- **Build** an effective model for budget allocation.

## Now that you've seen how personalization is having an impact on your business – make sure you have the tools you need for success

- 1 Mastering Personalization to Drive Better Loyalty Through Chat Bots and AI**

China is way ahead of the curve when it comes to technology, namely their use of personalized messaging, chat bots, social and artificial intelligence. Now more companies are jumping on the chat bot wagon, and investing in technology for improved real-time communications with customers.
- 2 The Mobile Concierge: How New Technology is Revolutionizing Service**

Travelers are essentially attached to their mobile and tablet devices while in-trip and travel brands must take advantage of this: 35% of Activity Search is done on a smartphone, while 23% is done on a tablet. Hotels are beginning to take advantage of this by investing in mobile concierge services, including digital keys, digital check-in and messaging. Could this mean the end of the hotel lobby as we know it?
- 3 States are rolling out with new regulations and cracking down on sharing services**

Think about the travel disrupters of 2014-2015 that shook up the market: HotelTonight, AirBnB, and Uber. And why: they are seamless, deliver immediate options, and let the traveler pick up and go whenever they feel like it. The preparation phase is being skipped—today's travelers want to experience all that is out there, as much as they can. But these companies that were once thought to be the future of the industry are now experiencing a backlash from state lawmakers.

Austin recently banned the use of ride sharing services, including Uber and Lyft. , California and New York are cracking down on AirBnB. Are these disrupters just a fad, or will they rework their model to stay in the game?

## Ready to revolutionize your eCommerce strategies to win the booking? Here's how Digital Travel can help!

The Digital Travel Summit is the eCommerce, digital marketing strategy and customer experience event for travel, hospitality and leisure (THL). The THL industry is going through an extraordinary period of change as more companies consolidate (think Expedia, Priceline buying up all the OTAs or Starwood and Marriott merger). As these big name brands continue to buy each other out, marketers are tasked with streamlining digital platforms across all channels. These companies are experiencing complete digital overhauls and need to navigate the changing landscape in order to maintain customer loyalty across brands. THL companies must embrace digital strategies, harness technology to improve operations, and enhance the consumer experience to build true loyalty.

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