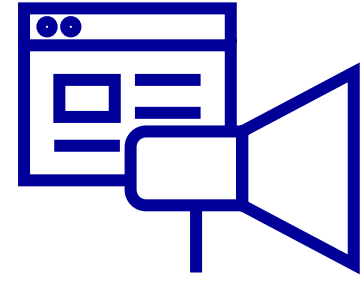


eBook

# How to create content to keep travelers engaged



**expedia group**<sup>™</sup>  
 partner solutions



## What is content marketing?

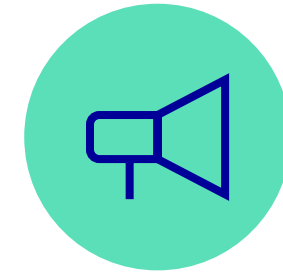
The idea is simple: Rather than directly sell your business, create genuinely useful and entertaining content to start a real conversation with travelers.



**Create bite-sized travel inspiration**  
for when they're searching online  
or waiting in a queue



**Offer practical tips and tricks**  
for planning their dream trip in  
half the time



**Really stand out from the crowd**  
and recommend top trending  
things to do while away



With the right content, you can go beyond a transaction to nail the 'know, like, trust' factor instead.<sup>1</sup> Simple doesn't mean easy though.

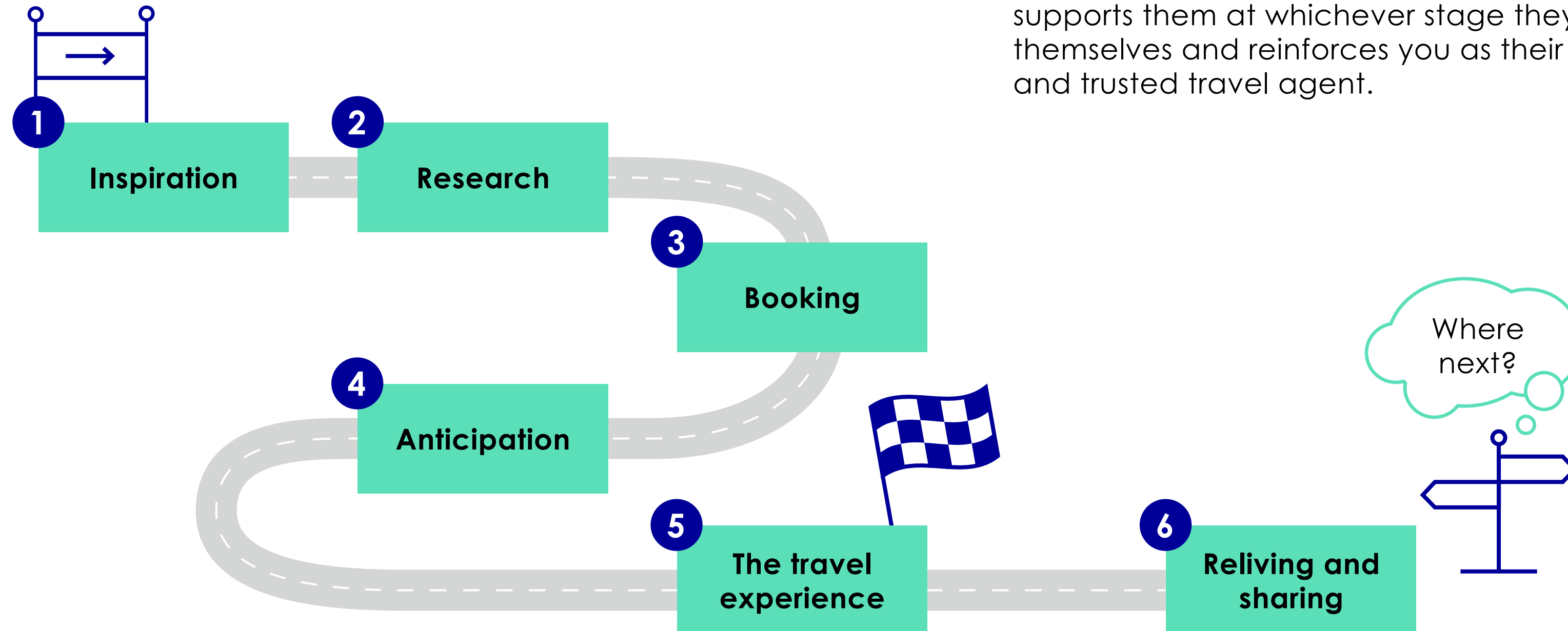
In this eBook, we'll look at the core principles and techniques of content marketing to help you rise above the competition.

<sup>1</sup> <https://copyblogger.com/30-know-like-trust-actions/>

## The user journey

All good content plans start with an understanding of the user journey.

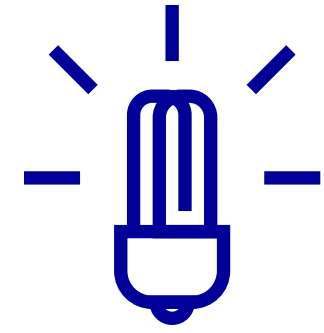
In travel, users typically follow six stages in their journey, from the first spark of inspiration to reliving a holiday with friends and family.



The reality can be a little more complex, of course. Travel is often a big-ticket purchase, and it can be highly emotive. Travelers may get halfway through the journey, spot a new deal, and head all the way back to the beginning.

The important thing is to create content that supports them at whichever stage they find themselves and reinforces you as their preferred and trusted travel agent.





## 1. Inspiration

Travelers visit some 140 travel sites before booking,<sup>2</sup> creating multiple chances for destination-focused content to capture that 'I-want-to-get-away-moment.' It is important to keep travelers engaged with exciting, interesting, and inspiring content.

Try these:

- **listicles:** Break content down into easy-to-read, numbered sections, for example: '7 underrated European cities you have to visit'
- **predictions of new, exciting places or travel trends:** Provide insight into exciting destinations still off the tourist track or summarize the latest trends, as in 'How to be an eco-tourist'

- **facts and stats:** Keep it light and exciting here, saving the practical facts and figures for later. Think, '5 things you didn't know about Chicago'
- **Q&As/ interviews:** Add credibility with top travel experts, or aspiration from high-profile jetsetters, say, 'Instagram influencers share their top Balinese hotels'
- **infographics:** Bring facts and figures to life with colorful infographics that give travelers a quick visual snapshot of a destination or experience
- **newsletter:** Consider a quarterly newsletter to ensure the time commitment isn't huge and opt for a theme each time, maybe festive getaways in November or romantic breaks in late January/ early February

- **quizzes:** A quiz is fantastic interactive content, try 'How well do you really know Sydney?' or 'What destination matches your personality type?'
- **comical pieces:** Great travel content feels real and relevant, and humor can be a great tool. Try things like: 'What not to do on a family beach holiday'
- **virtual events:** Step up the dialogue with virtual events that give travelers a chance to engage with you directly and ask all their burning questions
- **memes:** Done well, memes are endlessly shareable. Just make sure you know your audience, add originality, and keep it topical<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://welcome.expediagroup.com/en/resources/improve-hotel-guest-experience-resources-tips/set-hotel-guest-expectations-ota>

<sup>3</sup> <https://shanebarker.com/blog/marketing-memes/>



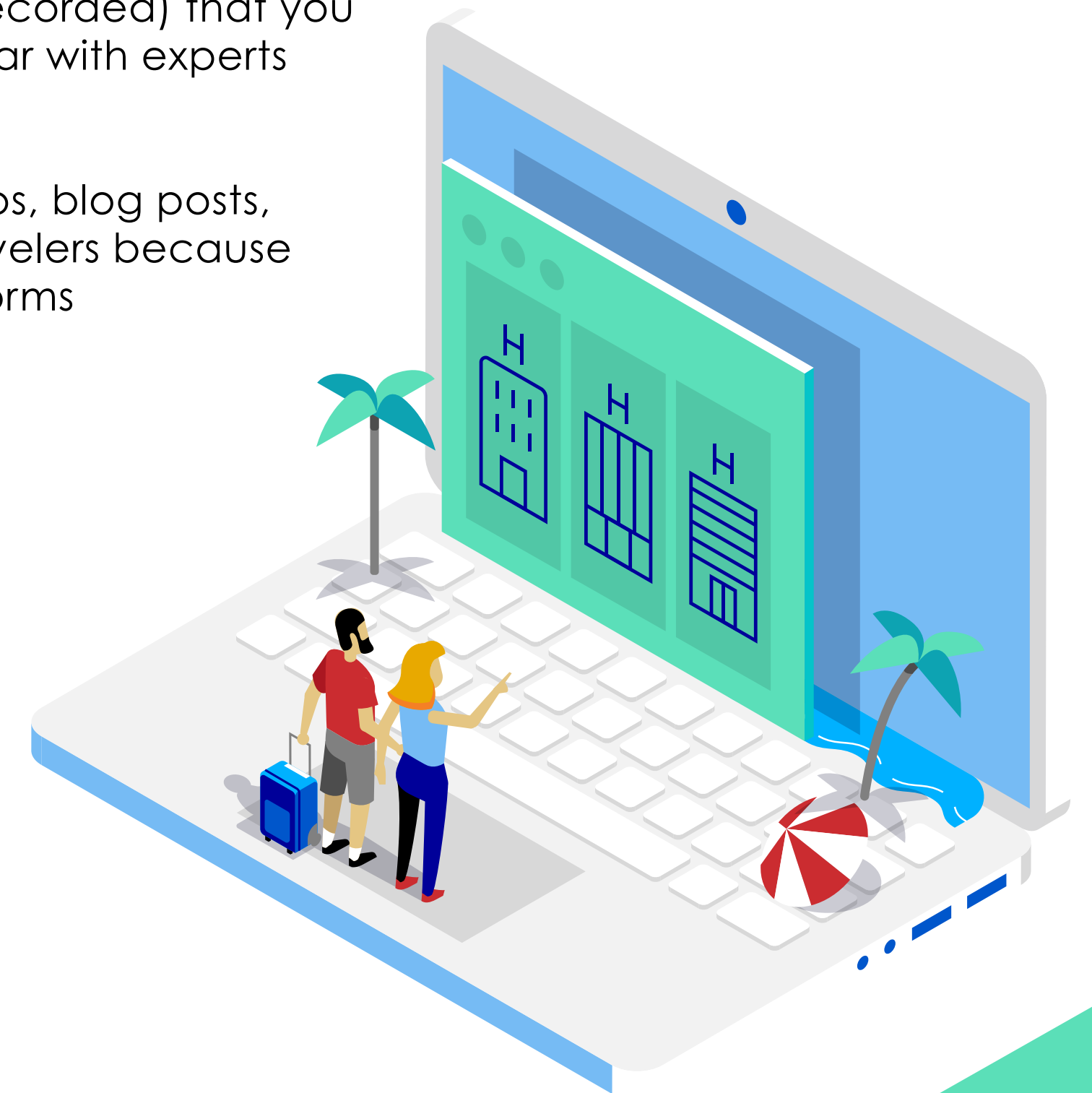
## 2. Research

Add a practical edge to destination content as travelers move into the planning stage, helping them weigh up different options and build their excitement as they start to imagine their vacation.

Try these:

- **travel guides:** Offer advice on how to secure the best deals and enjoy the smoothest trip; focus on local public transport, peak seasons, and deals on flights
- **planning guides:** Create destination-specific 'one-stop shop' handbooks that cover everything from top attractions to best-rated hotels and typical weather

- **webinar about a destination:** Go one step further with a webinar (either live or pre-recorded) that you might host or simply share a webinar with experts sharing advice on a destination
- **testimonials:** Provide reviews, videos, blog posts, pictures, and top tips from real travelers because word of mouth is one of the best forms of recommendation





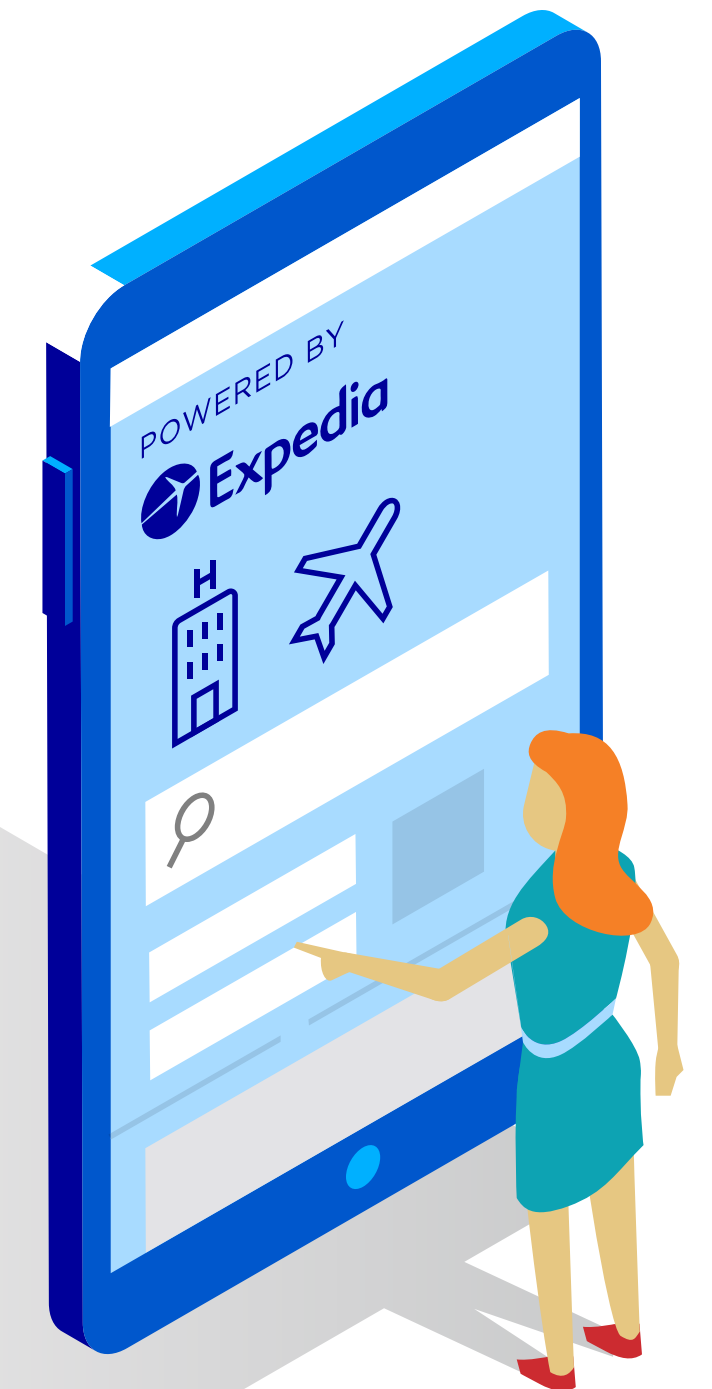
## 3. Booking

Less glamorous, yes, but content to guide travelers through the booking process is just as important to make the booking experience as easy as possible.

Try these:

- **booking checklist:** Guide your travelers through the booking process by laying out what they need for a smooth booking experience (passport numbers, date preferences, budget, payment card)
- **frequently asked questions:** Sections including your FAQs will limit calls to traveler service teams, provide traveler support, and improve your website's visibility and position in search engine results. Try to flag this page prominently on your website

- **specific information:** Create handy destination explainers or guides to help travelers check on practicalities like costs, average flight times, etc.
- **post-booking support:** Ensure travelers know how to access post-booking support, so they know you're available to amend the booking or answer questions. Making it easy to ask questions direct will build trust and loyalty.
- **email follow-up:** Build excitement post-booking with emails that count down to travel dates and offer helpful reminders, like picking plane seats and what to pack





## 4. Anticipation

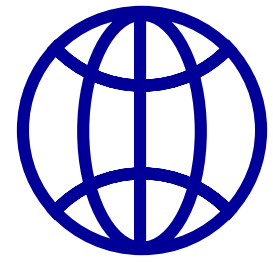
With the booking made, now you can help travelers dream of and plan for that much deserved trip. Take the relationship beyond the commercial with content designed to help them do just that.

Try these:

- **packing checklists:** Will they need cash? What temperature should they dress for? What packing hacks will help them squeeze more in their suitcase?
- **how to guides:** Create sample itineraries or guides that tackle common challenges and provide ancillary upsells. Try ideas like, 'How to explore southern Spain by car'



- **demos/ walk throughs:** Place travelers in the moment by sharing 360° video tours of hotels and recommending walking tours of top attractions on YouTube
- **books/movies:** Curate indulgent suggested reading and watching lists to whet their appetite, maybe. '5 movies you have to watch before heading to New York'
- **eBooks:** Offer travelers tips, tricks, and even maps they can download as an eBook and browse at leisure, even when Wi-Fi isn't available
- **language course:** Compile a short list of easy phrases in the local language for travelers to practice. Add phonetic spellings and audio files, so they know how to say them, too



## 5. Travel Experience

Content takes a bit of a back seat at this stage, but there are still opportunities for highly practical information designed for use 'on the ground.'

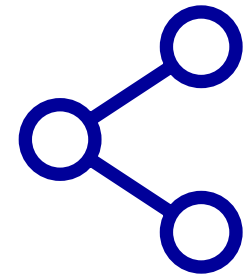
Try these:

- **itineraries:** Keep these succinct, practical (prices, directions, etc.) and focus on a short window of time, for example 'Where to eat on your first night in Amsterdam'
- **destination guides:** Swap inspiration for insight at this stage, with downloadable maps, handy telephone numbers, and hints on costs, tips, and where to book day trips

- **print-out tour sheets for kids:** Up the fun with print-out tours / activities / games for youngsters, maybe '10 things to spot as you walk around Prague'
- **audio tours:** Turn smartphones into pocket guides with short walking tours of cities or attractions available on your website, as a podcast, or audio-only YouTube video
- **app:** Position your app as a useful tool that goes beyond the commercial transaction and flags up relevant content when travelers are on the move







## 6. Reliving and sharing

Although moments shared with friends and family are often private, reliving their experience and finding inspiration for making more memories is still something you can support travelers with.

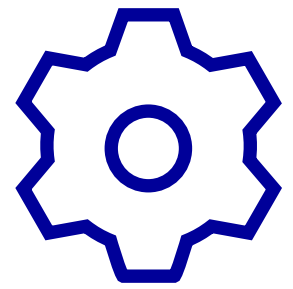
Try these:

- **testimonials:** Encourage travelers to relive the best (and worst) bits of their trip. It will build a collection of valuable user-generated content and help your next set of travelers at the same time
- **traveler quotes:** Consider offering a small incentive in exchange for the quotes—entry in a prize draw is a great way to source excellent user-generated content

- **interviews / essays:** Take inspiration from The Guardian's Readers Travel Tips<sup>4</sup> section by asking travelers to pen a short essay or answer a few short questions about their travels
- **photography competitions:** Celebrate the best travel snaps from your travelers with a prize for the winning entry
- **quizzes:** Help groups relive their last trip in a novel way with destination-based quizzes that test how much they really listened on that city tour



<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/series/readers-travel-tips>



## Content skills

**Remember, content is king, and planning will really help you in the long run. Here are some top tips to help you develop your skills.**

### Planning skills

- Rather than batch and blast pieces of content, try using a tool like a content matrix<sup>5</sup> to plan and organize your content ideas and approach
- Planning tools can make content generation easier and help you focus on when you want to send the content and what you want to achieve from each piece
- It is important to think about the type of behavior you want to influence by either entertaining, inspiring, educating, or convincing travelers through engaging content

### Writing skills

- Develop a clear style and tone of voice that fits your brand—and stick to it
- Consider your demographic—how do they speak and what language do they use? Aim to reflect that back at them. Define a tone using a handful of adjectives and phrases that resonate both with you and your audience distill those into writing techniques<sup>6</sup>
- Use some examples<sup>7</sup> to create your own clear guide on brand style to share with all writers and contributors

### Video skills

- Create that professional feel and invest in equipment such as editing software, basic lighting, and sound equipment
- Know when to host and when to post. Identify when to host content on your

- own site and when to distribute on third-party platforms<sup>8</sup>
- Balance the inspiration of destination video tours with education pieces, such as live Q&As with travel experts

### Images

- Keep images relevant, on-brand, and impactful
- Use online software such as Canva<sup>9</sup> to create a consistent brand style and engaging visual assets

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.smartinsights.com/content-management/content-marketing-strategy/the-content-marketing-matrix-new-infographic/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/brand-voice/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://voiceandtoneguides.webflow.io/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/serenitygibbons/2020/11/03/4-ways-to-maximize-your-social-video-ads/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.canva.com/en\\_gb/](https://www.canva.com/en_gb/)

## Content skills (cont'd)

### Sources

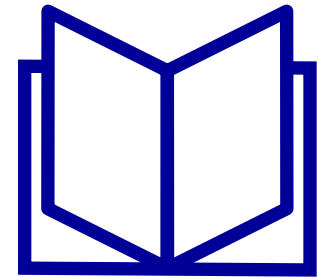
- Keep a swipe file or shareable list of all potential sources for content ideas—relevant news sites, partners, social media, and even rival businesses
- As an Expedia TAAP partner, you have direct access to the latest industry updates, and you can brush up on your skills at our TAAP Academy training hub<sup>10</sup>

### Timing

- Flag content that fits your traveler's day, so if they're likely to be browsing on the way to work, hit them with inspiring images of their dream trip or ultra-accessible step-by-step guides rather than text-heavy pieces
- Create and share content inspired by topical news stories—this is called newsjacking
- Act as a bridge between your suppliers and your travelers, say, if a partner airline introduces new seating or in-flight entertainment features, share it too

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.expediataap.com/index.html>





## Glossary

### Types of content marketing:

- **editorial content:** anything that isn't directly focused on your products or services—blog posts, features, quizzes, guides, listicles, etc.
- **Vlogs:** a blog post or guide in video format that provides information or inspiration to travelers
- **SEO:** search engine optimization—using keywords and / or phrases to push the ranking / reach of your content
- **PPC:** pay-per-click—paid-for content where price scales in direct relation to reach
- **FAQs:** frequently asked questions—self-service channel addressing travelers' most common problems, questions, and concerns
- **influencer:** any public figure but often used to refer to high-profile figures on

social media, many of which partner with businesses on sponsored content

- **professional video content:** video shot by specialist operators using specialist equipment rather than simply a smartphone
- **webinars/ guest webinars:** an informative online event hosted by you or expert guests
- **VR:** virtual reality—can bring destination videos to life, and possible with nothing more than a \$15 Google Cardboard<sup>11</sup> and a smartphone
- **AI:** artificial intelligence—a broad term that encompasses everything from tools that track your traveler journey online to automated content creation of reports and descriptions

### Types of editorial content:

- **experience tips:** advice built around credible 'been there, done that' tips from other travelers
- **explainers:** simple 'how to' articles and guides that tackle common challenges faced by your travelers
- **quizzes:** an opportunity to create interaction and engagement with travelers, rather than simply passive content
- **local guides:** focused destination guides that help your travelers navigate specific towns, cities, or regions
- **then and now:** a creative way to explore a destination by comparing how it's changed over time
- **destination guides:** broader guides that provide a snapshot of a whole destination, best for inspiration and planning

<sup>11</sup> <https://arvr.google.com/cardboard/>