

How to start a travel blog?

Travel blogging is one of the most important ways to generate sales for your tourism products. It can increase your sales in your existing target market, as well as create new opportunities, for example by using bloggers from different disciplines, which appeal to a new group of potential customers. Therefore, you need to invest in writing, maintaining and planning your company's travel blog. To get the most out of your travel blogging, these are our top 10 tips!

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Why travel blogging?

The word "blog" is short for "weblog": written text posts published on the internet. Blogs can also consist of mainly photos (photolog) or just a video (vlog). They are usually displayed in reverse chronological order, with the most recent post appearing first. When it comes to generating booking and sales for your business, blogging can be an influential marketing tool. It adds a human, informal touch to a professional website.

Travel blogging is ideal for your tourism business because it:

- has a positive effect on your search engine optimisation (SEO)
- generates traffic to your website
- acts as your social media hub
- can position you as an expert in your field
- reaches a wider market (word of mouth referrals)
- builds trust and loyalty with your customers.

Would you like to know how to get started? Here are our top 10 tips on how to successfully use travel blogging for your tourism business.

1. Have the basic requirements in order

Blogging can be seen as the icing on the cake when it comes to internet marketing for tourism. It can be highly successful and very rewarding. However, before you start, you should have the basics of internet marketing perfectly in order.

What you need before you start blogging:

- a good website – informative, attractive, complete and with good quality photos and videos
- tools to measure the performance of your website – for instance, the number of unique and returning visitors, page views and countries of origin
- [search engine optimisation](#) (SEO) – good blogs make your website rank higher in search results
- a social media policy – you should be actively using social media, in any case [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and/or [YouTube](#).

Blogging and social media should be an integrated part of your business. You will need to invest time and money.

2. Do not write all posts yourself

If you write all the blog posts yourself, it can easily become boring. It may start to look like either a copy of your website, or ordinary marketing. This will not generate the marketing success you are hoping for. In fact, it might even scare away potential customers.

Therefore, user-generated content (UGC) is the key to a successful blog. By inviting other people to write on your blog, your company becomes more trustworthy and genuine. Plus, the variation often makes the blogs more interesting to read.

There are four types of people that you can invite to contribute to your blog:

- professional travel bloggers – you can let them write a guest blog on your website, or a blog about your business on their website
- professional photographers or videographers – you can hire them for a day to experience your destination and then use their material on your blog
- regional experts/characters – if they have good writing skills, you can ask them to blog on a regular basis
- visitors – visitor comments and photographs are excellent content for a blog, but make sure to get their permission before using their content.

You can give guest bloggers the opportunity to experience your destination through incentives like a:

- bloggers trip – organise a familiarisation (FAM) trip for a group of bloggers
- private trip – offer a specific guest blogger a trip to experience your destination
- bloggers house – invite a blogger or a group of bloggers to a bloggers house where they can experience living like a local, such as the [My Helsinki Residence](#) and [The Hague Bloggers House](#).

Treksoft explains [how to run a FAM trip](#) in a guest blog. Flow Social Media also gives you [Five Tips for Planning an Awesome Blogger FAM Trip](#).

3. Carefully select a guest blogger

When you are looking to invite other (professional) people to make content for your blog, you have to choose the right person for you.

Before approaching a blogger, look at their:

- passion – is their blog written with passion and emotion?
- number of followers – what is the reach of their blog?
- profile – what kind of blogger are they?
- visitor profile – read the comments, what type of readers does the blog have?
- blog frequency – do they post regularly?
- tone of voice – the blog should not be too positive, but must feel genuine, personal and professional (in that order), are they credible?

For more information, see [What Adventure Travel Businesses Need to Know About Working With Influencers](#) according to the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA).

4. Ask the right questions

When you are approaching (or being approached) by a blogger, you should ask them:

- what their experience is – can they give examples of their blogs for other companies?
- what their specialties are – also if these are non-tourism related, see tip 5
- if you can see the article before it is published
- if they currently only work with your destination or business
- what you will get when you pay them – for example the number and length of posts
- what they expect from you – for example paid stay, flights, tour or pay by article
- what their network is like – do they have a network that might be interesting for your business and/or can they share their blog about your business on different platforms?

5. Consider working with bloggers from different disciplines

It seems obvious to work with people from the travel industry, and this can be very interesting. However, it can be even more interesting to work with people from other industries. Or with people who work with travel from another perspective. They can offer you an entirely new platform to promote your tourism company on. This may bring you a whole new group of potential customers.

For example, different perspectives on travelling to Bhutan can be:

- food bloggers – try the delicious cuisine of Bhutan
- mommy bloggers – travelling to Bhutan with my three children
- solo female travellers – single, female, and travelling alone through Bhutan
- digital nomads – working 9 to 5 from beautiful Bhutan
- lifestyle bloggers – handcrafted home decoration in Bhutan
- people with food allergies – how Bhutan catered perfectly to my family with allergies

6. Share your blog

A good blog has to be shared. You can share it via:

- your social media channels
- your newsletter/e-newsletter to visitors
- your industry newsletter/e-newsletter
- public relation websites.

Also encourage other people to share your blog posts. Approach relevant travel magazines/e-magazines to see if they are willing to publish them. Ask national and/or regional tourism associations to share them on their social media channels and/or marketing/e-marketing channels. Also include buttons on your website that make it easy for visitors to share your blog posts on their social media.

7. Develop a blog calendar

A blog calendar can help you to blog regularly. It shows you per blog post:

- who is responsible
- what the contents are
- when it should be published.

Planning the content of your blog prevents the stress of having to come up with a fresh idea when a new post is due. It also helps you to think about your blog from a bigger picture.

Example of a blog calendar:

Who	When	Topic/title	Content details	Keywords	Target audience	Call to action
Mr Jones	November 15th 2018	5 secrets of		History Mongolia	Cultural tourist	Link to history tours

Repurposing content

Looking through your archives, you might rediscover a great blog post. You can republish this blog post if this is relevant, or think of a follow-up post or related topic that deserves its own article.

Improving your existing content

Pressing “publish” doesn’t mean you are done with a blog post. You can improve your SEO and keep your website relevant by updating content, or fixing inaccuracies and seeking areas for improvement. Leave an editor’s note stating when a post was published and updated, to avoid confusing readers with your changes. You can also keep track of edits in your blog calendar.

For the blog posts you write yourself:

8. Focus on one topic and choose an attractive title

Keep your target audience in mind. What kind of people would you like to attract? For more information, see our [top 10 tips for determining your Unique Value Proposition](#).

Think of a topic, this can be very general, such as “Temples in Bagan”. Then write a working title. This can give you some options in the direction of your final blog, to guide your blog post.

For example, the topic “temples in Bagan” can lead to the following working titles.

- How my kids got to play with the children from the temples in Bagan
- Where to best experience the sunrise in Bagan
- 5 secrets revealed about the temples of Bagan

Write your final title when your blogpost is almost finished. Ideally, your title is a teaser and makes people curious. For example, titles with numbers attract readers’ attention, such as “5 secrets of...” or “Our 10 favourite...”. Using alliteration like “Beautiful Bagan”, “Splendid Sri Lanka” or “Amazing Amazon” is also a fun way to create interest.

HubSpot has some good tips on [how to write catchy headlines and blog titles](#), as well as a report on [writing effective titles and headlines](#).

Use this [Character Count Guide for Blog Posts](#) to optimise your title for social sharing. This way it will not get cut off in search engine results.

9. Show your human side

Blogging is all about emotion. Online marketing often lacks human interaction, which is so important to attract customers to your business. Your potential customers read blogs from people they can identify with, or people that lead a life they wish they had. If you can appeal to the emotion of your potential customer, you are blogging right. Showing your human side is key.

Personal writing style

Choose a style of writing that you feel comfortable with. Blogging provides a great opportunity to tell your story and let people get to know you. By showing your personality and the people behind your brand, you can build trust.

Profiles

Use your name and show your photo in your bio. Share your experience. You could publish a “meet the team” blog post. For example, one of your guides can share what he loves most about his job. Or an outdoor activity professional can share her tricks of the trade after ten years in the industry. A good example of this is the website of [Rhino Africa](#).

Comments

Install the option for readers to comment on your blog. It gives people the opportunity to interact with you and it makes them feel connected with you. Make sure you always respond quickly to their comments.

10. Write attractively

There are many guides on how to write for the web, but some of the most important tips are the following.

- Layout – use headers and sub-headers, bolding, bullets and numbers.
- Intro – the introduction should generate curiosity and include the main question and benefits of reading the article.
- Length – a blog should neither be too long, nor too short. The right length depends on the message you want to get across and the information you want to share. Long articles often rank better in searches, so do not be afraid to share more if you can keep it concise, relevant, and high-quality.
- Images – a picture is worth a thousand words. Pictures should reinforce the message. A blogpost can also consist of mainly images and some text, such as “4 best pictures of...”.
- Call to action (CTA) – to convert blog readers into paying customers, you need to include CTAs. For tips and ideas on good CTAs, see for example HubSpot’s [8 Types of CTAs You Should Absolutely Try on Your Blog](#).

For more information on how travellers use the internet, see our [top 10 tips for online success with your tourism company](#).

For more information on how travellers use the internet, see our [top 10 tips for online tourist behaviour](#).

Please review our [market information disclaimer](#).