ATM 2024 experts say video content essential for engaging Gen Z travellers

During a session titled "How to build influence with Gen Z in just 30 seconds" at the 2024 Arabian Travel Market held from 6 to 9 at the Dubai World Trade Centre, Marc-Antoine Simon, industry manager for travel and tourism in the MENA region at TikTok, offered insights into the latest community-led marketing trends. He demonstrated how concise and impactful content can greatly affect travel choices.

Source: Freepik

According to research commissioned by Exodus Travels in 2023, only 45% of vacations lived up to or exceeded the perfect picture they had imagined. On average, travellers search through 38 different travel sites to figure out where to go, how to get there and where to book, with 58% admitting to abandoning a booking because the process has been too stressful.

The shift in travel planning

"Travel is one of the most sought-after pursuits in people's lives, so much so that they would sacrifice just about anything to get away. Unfortunately, the high likelihood of a trip leading to unwanted disappointment is why, ahead of a trip, people go the extra mile to ensure that the reward is maximised and the risk is neutralised," he explained.

Simon explained that today, this desire to take control of the search experience sees travellers swapping keywords for human words, queries for communities and information for immersion. This allows them to discover, on their terms, and

transform a daunting endeavour into an enjoyable journey, proving that travel is at the cusp of a new search era fuelled by people.

"Travellers need a search platform that offers fast results with visual content that is mobile and community-led. By creating their platform, they have eliminated major barriers to travel that once hindered the pre-booking journey, and these communities are making destinations viral overnight," he added.

An example of the power of user-generated content is Albania, a country often overlooked as a tourist destination. However, in 2022, the country suddenly gained popularity thanks to an influx of videos showcasing its tourism attributes. The impact was significant, with Skyscanner reporting a 44% increase in flight searches to Albania from the UK, and searches from the US also saw a significant uptick.

Social media's influence on Gen Z travellers

The expert panel included other notable figures, including Joshua Roche, CEO of Bulla Connect Ltd; Keith Herman, CEO of Trending Travel; and His Excellency Harris Whitbeck, Minister of Tourism Board of Guatemala. Their discussion

Marc-Antoine Simon, Industry Manager: Travel and Tourism, MENA, TikTok

focused on social media's pivotal role in influencing Gen Z's travel decisions and how these platforms can be leveraged to convert interest into tangible tourist engagements.

During the discussion, H.E. Whitbeck highlighted Guatemala's successful strategies for attracting Gen Z tourists, with a special emphasis on sustainability and eco-friendly initiatives that align with their values.

"Gen Z is a massive market for Guatemala, being highly educated and curious. With 78 million people using TikTok in Latin America, marketing the destination becomes a blank slate. However, while community-led coverage from Tiktok is welcome, Guatemala would prefer visitors who have a lower impact on our resources. To achieve this, we would need to leverage tools such as AI and Big Data to tailor our messaging to the right audience," he explained.

For more, visit: https://www.bizcommunity.com