



Social media set to book faces for travel operators

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Social media isn't viewed as a dominant revenue generator for travel tour operators currently, but a recent survey suggests such tactics will prove key business drivers in the near future. A study by the 600-plus-member Adventure Travel Trade Association and Convince & Convert, a social media consultancy, recently released findings of a survey called Travel, Tweets & Trends.

Brandon Lake, founder of Resmark Systems, said the study revealed that 48 per cent of North American travel tour operators participate in social media on a daily basis and, of those, 77 per cent participate in social media at least weekly.

However, findings showed that just 13 per cent of the companies surveyed cited social media as generating 10 per cent or more of their revenue. "If we repeated this survey again next year, chances are we'd see these percentages substantially increase," Mr Lake said, noting the current difficulties in actually measuring effectiveness and tracking revenue, leaving the gains from social media opaque.

Seventy per cent of companies that use social media spend only USD\$5,000 or less annually and 10 hours per week or fewer to work the potential of social media, the study said.

Facebook remains the dominant social media tactic, with more adventure tour operators now using Facebook than email newsletters.

"The travel market has an incredible opportunity to see major impact from social media since travellers love nothing more than sharing their travels," Mr Lake said.

"We found operators who had systems that automatically generated content from guests in blogs, Facebook and other social networks. Other companies have discovered ways to get reservations directly from Twitter. We also found a few making excellent use of guest videos online."

Over 225 tour operators from five continents answered the 23-question survey exploring the subject of social media.



*Social media sites such as Facebook
are set to play a greater role in revenue
generation for
travel tour operators*

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