online optimizations

Targeting, Testing and Personalizing Your Digital Tourism Marketing

Summary

↗ The value of optimizing content
   for destinations

↗ Optimization methods & examples

↗ How to successfully use optimizations

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This whitepaper is your introduction to optimizing digital marketing content for your destination. It includes an overview and examples of three types of optimizations – testing, targeting and personalization – and information to help you use online optimizations effectively.

Research shows that consumers prefer content which is customized to their needs and interests. In a recent study by Janrain & Harris Interactive, 74% of online consumers get frustrated with websites when content appears that has nothing to do with their interests.

So what does this mean for the travel and tourism industry?

» We have to deliver the most relevant content to each traveler, helping them find what they're looking for quickly and easily.

» Optimizations can help drive users to specific online goals – and help increase visitation to your destination.

» In addition to boosting results from your existing online audience, optimizations can help expand your audience and reach new potential travelers.

Optimization Method #1:
Testing

Whether it's A/B testing the hero image on a landing page, experimenting with email subject lines or doing "multi-variant testing" (e.g., evaluating more than one element with one test), TESTING drives continual improvements to content.

Homepage heroes and calls to action, as seen above on SonomaCounty.com, are one area where you can quickly and effectively improve engagement and conversions. Sonoma County Tourism tested four different images and CTAs on its homepage and discovered that its users responded best to landscape images and calls to action centered on wine. The next stage of the optimization included imagery based on interest.

Optimization Method #2:
Targeting

TARGETING focuses on outbound digital marketing, customizing content for users via online advertising or email. It's based on a user's profile and behavior, plus an ever-increasing amount of third-party data effectively used by advertising platforms like Google and Facebook.

Optimization technologies are breathing new life into existing digital channels like email, ensuring subscribers receive content suited to their interests. Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa's email sign-up confirmation uses messaging custom to the subscriber's demographic profile, such as seen in the example at left.

Optimization Method #3:
Personalization
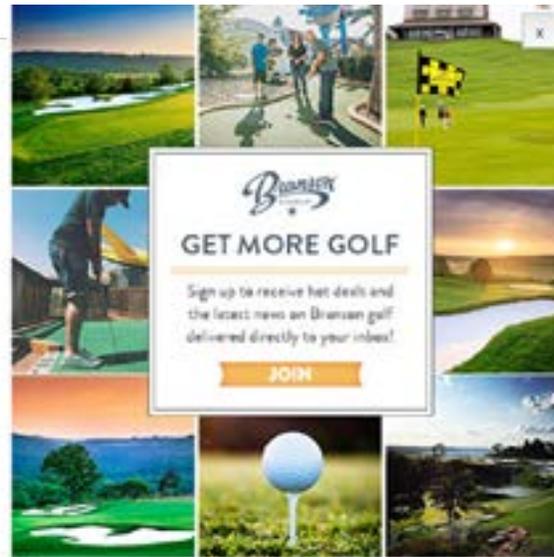
Customizing the content on your homepage or a landing page based on a user's location, previous engagement with your site or other online behavior is known as PERSONALIZATION. Personalization is often used in conjunction with targeting to customize the user experience across paid and owned channels.

The Branson/Lakes Area CVB used a personalization tool to deliver customized banner ads inviting users who had searched for entertainment content to sign up for the CVB's enewsletter. Email subscriptions increased 40% year over year, and open rates are now over 50%.

Optimization Platforms

A range of third-party solutions exists for online optimizations, allowing you to test everything from copy to images to user-generated content—even booking solutions for your site. When evaluating solutions to find one that's right for your organization and goals, ask yourself the following questions:

» Is it easy to use?

» How robust is the performance data I will receive?

» What kind of support can I expect from the service provider?

» What is the cost versus its ROI?

We recommend contacting Miles or your agency partner for guidance and talking with peers in your industry about their experience with various tools.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Digital marketing and optimization in particular is full of jargon, technical terms & acronyms that can be confusing. Our friends at Optimizely have created a simple Glossary that is a useful resource in 'demystifying' the language of optimization from "A/B Testing" to "Viewable Impression".

www.optimizely.com/optimization-glossary

5 Steps for Tackling Online Optimizations

Testing, targeting and personalization aren't one-off events, but ongoing, iterative improvements. Once you've identified your goals, budget and strategy, and found a tool that works for you, follow these five steps for managing online optimizations.

1
Set Business Goals

Establish clear, measurable goals driven by your organization's business objectives. Determine which goals to measure against and how you will know once you've succeeded.

2
Analyze

Dig into available analytics and research, analyzing existing performance metrics to use as benchmarks.

3
Gain Insight

Use this data to define problem areas, clearly identifying your opportunities.

4
Hypothesize

Hypothesize changes and updates you think will improve your metrics, whether it's testing one call to action against another or using personalization to deliver dynamic email content.

5
Take Action

Implement the optimization(s). Repeat this cycle, regularly reviewing your metrics and making updates to your content. Remember, optimizations work best when you continually evolve them.

Examples of Optimization Platforms & Resource Libraries:

These are platform that Miles has used with success in partnership with our clients recently. Not a complete list of platforms that exist.

» **Visual Website Optimizer VMO:** www.vwo.com & their Resource: www.vwo.com/resources

» **AB Tasty** www.abtasty.com & Glossary: www.abtasty.com/cro-glossary

» **GetSmartContent:** www.getsmartcontent.com & Library: www.getsmartcontent.com/resources

» **Acquia** www.acquia.com & their Resource Library: www.acquia.com/resources

» **Optimizely** www.optimizely.com & their Resource Library: www.optimizely.com/resources

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↗ Website
MilesPartnership.com

This is the place to meet our team, learn more about the services we offer, peruse our in-depth research library and check out our latest blog post.

↗ Blog
MilesPartnership.com/blog

More than two dozen Miles employees post regularly about new trends, industry insights and best practices in online, mobile, print and integrated content marketing.

↗ Research
MilesPartnership.com/library

We stay at the forefront of tourism trends, conducting independent studies on leisure travel and publishing our semiannual findings in a variety of outlets.

↗ Email

We believe that proactive communication is a key to continuous engagement, so we send out bimonthly emails to keep our clients and industry partners in the loop.

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