

# Customer mapping for targeted travel

Nine signposts to maximise your industry marketing strategies

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**Ian Walsh,**  
Lead Consultant, Experian Marketing Services

The travel sector was one of the first industries to be revolutionised by digital technology with many organisations having to fundamentally change their way of doing business. This guide has been produced to help those in the travel industry to develop ways to maximise the effectiveness of all marketing channels and really begin to understand and adapt to a fast changing market. The guide provides nine tips to develop an effective framework to beginning effective marketing planning.

## Introduction

The travel industry has been quick to embrace digital channels, but is yet to leverage the power of its customer data fully. Your customers generate priceless information about themselves and their behaviours, giving marketing a laser sharp focus — but only if it's captured, analysed and used in intelligent ways.

So, how do you understand the journeys your customers take before they pack their bags? By following these nine signposts, data can help you to map your customers in more detail than ever before, generating deep insight that can then deliver marketing precision.



## 1. Get a map

Holidays should be a happy time and are a major financial and emotional investment, so consumers will take a number of careful steps before they commit: from awareness to consideration, from shortlisting to purchase. Mapping this journey will:

- enable measurement against performance indicators to predict demand accurately;
- develop understanding of the role that each channel plays in influencing consumers and so allow more effective targeting of marketing activity; and
- allow you to anticipate changes in the market and evolve new strategies rapidly, based on deep customer understanding.



Channels may be multiplying, but messaging must be consistent. With information available from a plethora of sources, it's likely your website won't be the first or only place customers go to for the low down on your products. If you know how they are likely to behave across all channels you can deploy consistent messaging at the right time and in ways that they appreciate.

## 2. Stay on-message

So, you've just got 100,000 views of your YouTube video, but how many of these people are likely to become customers? Demographic analysis allows you to understand the type of consumer who normally buys from you, who else they might buy their holidays from and other destinations they might be interested in.

With this insight, you can identify and target marketing (both content and channel) to the 5,000 YouTube viewers most likely to convert from passive viewer to active customer. It means you get more bang from your marketing buck and can better gauge demand.

## 3. Demographics

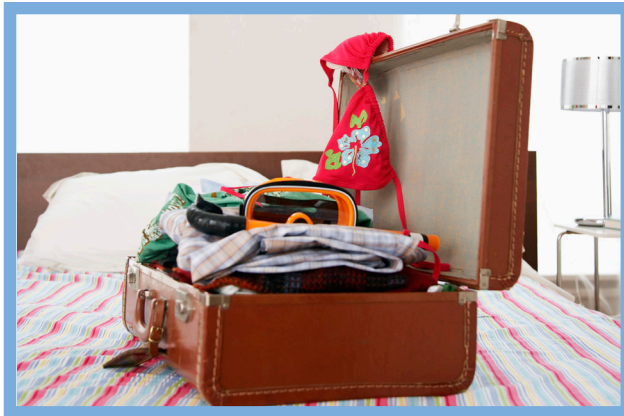
#### 4. Listen-learn-improve

As well as driving sales at the front end, digital channels also allow you to improve your offering at the back end. Be proactive about engaging your customers about their experience, both of the purchasing journey and the holiday itself.

If they report that they nearly gave up the booking process because your website was difficult to navigate — improve it. If they write a review that says the plumbing was noisy in their room — fix it. If they say they didn't know what attractions were available at their destination — think about novel ways of helping them, such as a smartphone app.

#### 5. Word of mouth

In the digital age, word of mouth has gone global. With the inexorable growth of travel review sites, for example, the opinions of other consumers have a huge influence on your customers' purchasing decisions. It's essential that you take part in these conversations, monitoring and managing references to your brand — once again recognising this as an opportunity to rectify issues before they become problems, keep your finger on the pulse of changing expectations and continually improve your offering.



A recent Google study showed that 46 per cent of personal travellers and 68 per cent of business travellers watched online videos during the research phase of their purchase. It underlines the importance of showing your customers the experiences you offer as well as telling them.

It's a powerful medium and means you need to think about ways of making compelling videos, and innovative ways of sharing them — for example, video is perfect for both email and social media sharing.

#### 6. Show and tell

## 7. Search

With so many opportunities to find out about travel products, you need to give your website all the help it can get to appear at the top of customers' online searches. Customers will use Search to dig out the best deals, comparing products — and you want to be a part of that comparison. Investing in search insight will help you to ensure that you're always part of the decision making equation, can keep an eye on what competitors are up to and ensure that your offering is itself competitive.

## 8. Go mobile

Smartphones are transforming the travel industry, with more and more UK consumers using them to search online, check emails and use apps that they find helpful. Harnessing this trend demands some agility, and you should be thinking about a range of opportunities, including:

- mobile optimised marketing emails and websites;
- apps that are both useful and maximise marketing opportunities; and
- geo-location technology, allowing you to send offers that are relevant to where your customers are.



The more you map and understand your customers, the better able you are to create compelling marketing that anticipates and meets needs. Digital insight brings us this understanding and so must be integral to modern marketing strategies. Whilst the amount of data now available can be confusing, by working with data marketing specialists you can turn this complexity into marketing clarity and simplicity.

## 9. And finally...

If you are interested in any of the topics discussed here or would like more information about how Experian Marketing Services can help your business please contact us:

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**T: 0844 481 0019**

**E: [data.analytics@uk.experian.com](mailto:data.analytics@uk.experian.com)**

**or visit: [www.experian.co.uk/travel](http://www.experian.co.uk/travel)**

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Riverleen House  
Electric Avenue  
Nottingham  
NG80 1RH  
[www.experian.co.uk](http://www.experian.co.uk)



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