

Content marketing practices - Airbnb case study



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In our next case study we bring you a very current and active brand that has utilised content as a way to engage audiences further, bring new audiences in and generate leads resulting in sales.

Airbnb is a website that allows users to cash in on extra unused space in their homes by renting rooms to travellers. Now in 192 countries, it has broken the status quo in traditional short term vacation rentals industry.

With the expansion of the company, Airbnb has had to evolve to suit the needs of users. They've done this by delving into content marketing and featuring a range of interesting and useful content, with their strategy utilising customer-centred, original and user-generated content to grow sales and increase engagement.

Airbnb has implemented content marketing practices by adding special features to their site that go above and beyond the user's experience of booking a room through them and giving their users a reason to return to the site through offering value.

Some of the new features include a step-by-step guide to booking on Airbnb, a trip planner, tips and information. It has also introduced video content through AirbnbTV, which features a series of videos such as guided tours, host stories, promotional videos and a guide to 'living local'.

1. Extended engagement: Airbnb Neighbourhood Guides

The neighbourhood guides are placed directly below the fold on the homepage for easy user-centric navigation, and each city's thumbnail is paired with rich quality images that represent the city culturally and visually. Each guide's landing page offers categorised content on places of interest: from "Famous for Food" to "Trendy" and "Peace & Quiet".

It also includes traditional travel guide information like dining, shopping and nightlife. This brilliant use of content is created purposely for the needs of the users, who have access to authentic information from locals and previous visitors, helping them to make informed decisions on their destination city.

2. Inform and educate: Airbnb TV

Airbnb TV is focused on creating a community around its service, with the site housing video content from across its various platforms, providing users with testimonials, tutorials and guided tours.

One video focuses on safety and security and Airbnb's efforts to work in conjunction with communities to ensure visitors and renters are protected from fraud and damages.

Meanwhile, the tutorial section offers informative videos on topics from creating an attractive listing to asking for a security deposit. This type of user-orientated content is helpful and interesting and easy to consume.

3. Testimonials: The Airbnb Lifestyle

Airbnb Life is a content hub dedicated to testimonials, and is comprised of content about how users have benefited from the website, be it financially, socially or emotionally.

Testimonials allow Airbnb to curate authentic, motivational and educational content easily through the community built around their service. From personal success stories to apartment reviews, Airbnb Life shows off a strong sense of community.

4. Drive leads: Social engagement and calls-to-action

Airbnb has successfully utilised social media contact points - primarily their Facebook and Twitter accounts, although they have a strong YouTube presence too - to promote their user-created content.

In order to encourage engagement, Airbnb held a competition using Twitter and Instagram, \$2,000 worth of travel credit was up for grabs. Users were asked to share "cool, innovative twist on a summer cliché" photos and then tag it #Airbnbfun.

5. Drive customer loyalty and trust: Airbnb Connections

Airbnb introduced a feature called Social Connections which allows Airbnb users to sync their Facebook account with their Airbnb account. The tool indicates whether friends have previously booked into a place you're currently considering. This feature is important in that it taps into the most powerful propeller of online sharing and commerce: word-of-mouth recommendations.

The Social Connection feature indicates the top-rated rentals within a user's social network by tailoring the search, making users feel safer and more confident booking through Airbnb.

It's not difficult for a brand to embark on a strategy like Airbnb have, ultimately what you need to do is think about what your users want, what you have to offer, and link the two with clever use of content.

Content marketing and strategy may seem far removed from what you can do, but in fact they are simply new ways to think about your already existing content, and plan what to do with it!

ABOUT ATHAR NASER

I specialise in content marketing and native advertising - two areas that I have been involved in strategically and on a ground level for many years. My media career has spanned a variety of senior roles that have lead me to start my own content agency with my personal vision - one of high quality service, products and innovation. My clients now benefit from and are part of this vision.

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