

Partnerships & Alliances



A report by the
Digital Tourism Think Tank
as part of the

12 Stages of Transformation Series





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ABOUT THE DIGITAL TOURISM THINK TANK



The Digital Tourism Think Tank is the industry platform that promotes digital leadership in the tourism industry. Comprising a tightly-knit network of highly engaged marketers, thinkdigital.travel is a truly connected market place, where thought leaders share experiences and best practices. We've put together a team of experts in diverse and varied fields of the tourism industry and we've been connecting destinations worldwide, from the Faroe Islands to Cape Town.



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INTRODUCTION

With an increasing demand for tourism and an expected annual growth of 4-5% in the number of international tourist arrivals, as forecast by the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer¹, there is no doubt that tourism is one of the major driving forces of the economy nowadays. The tourism sector is fragmented by definition, because it encompasses many different actors and players which form part of the tourism experience. But the role of the DMO is slowly shifting from a marketing-only perspective to a management perspective. This has fostered change in the sector and today many DMOs have already started their transformation journey to become the primary subject of reference for the coordination of the tourism players at the destination.

In fact, in order to be competitive on the market, destinations need to embrace the digital era and adapt to the ever changing needs of visitors, but starting a transformation journey for a DMO is not necessarily easy.

This is why the [Digital Tourism Think Tank](#) has developed a framework to help destinations to shift their role from *DMO* to *DxO*, where the “x” stands for the mathematical symbol.



The focus of this type of organisation nowadays is not marketing-only anymore, it can be experience, data, management, innovation, product, partnerships, storytelling, etc.

Transformation is not an exact science. We work with a thoroughly thought-through methodology and adapt it to the unique needs of each destination fostering collaboration, transparency and productivity within the team. The transformation journey in this sense is;

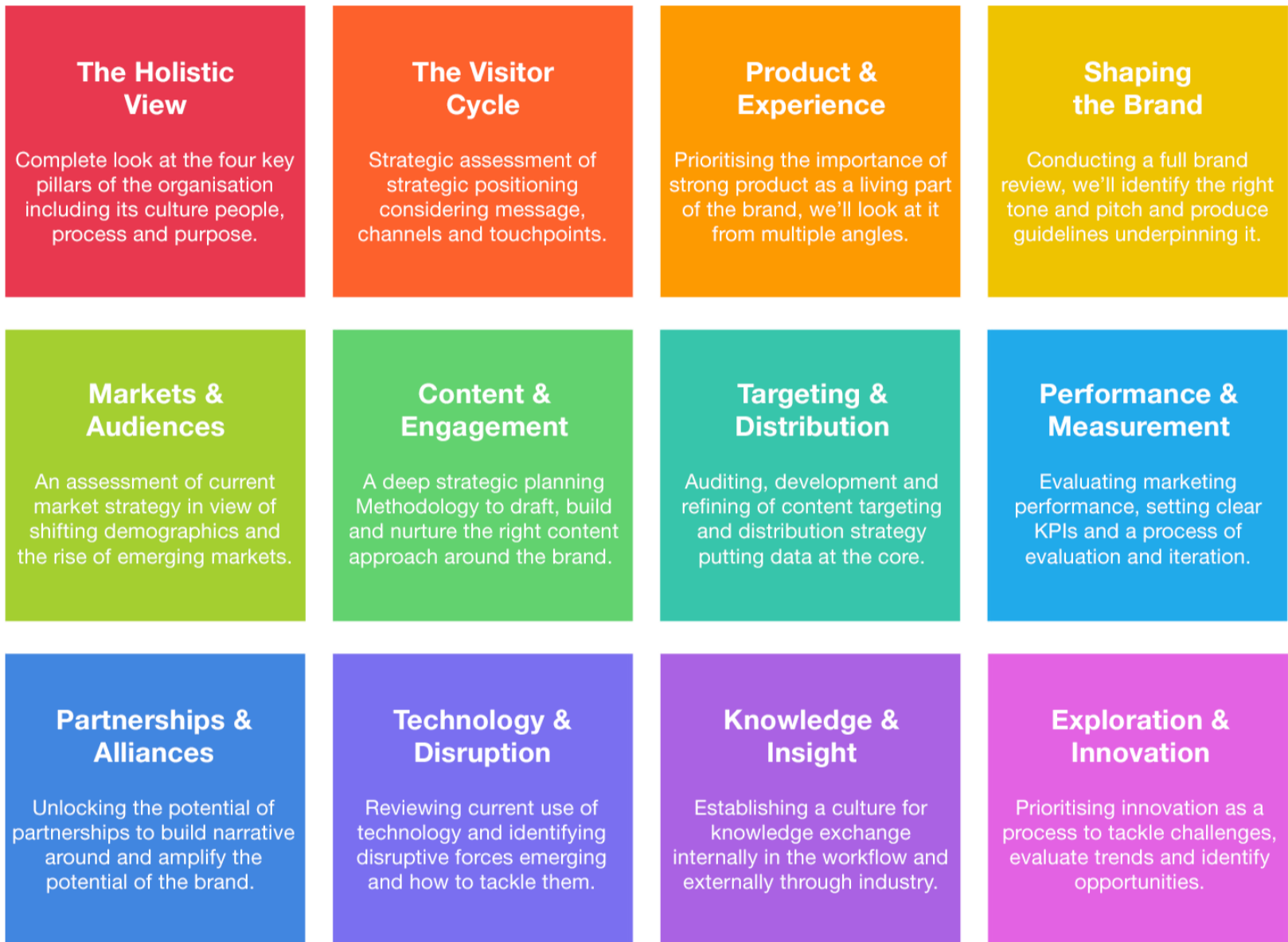


¹ <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2018-01-15/2017-international-tourism-results-highest-seven-years>



The **12 Stages of Transformation Series** is a comprehensive pack of resources created by the #DTTT Team which follows the Transformation Framework, a model built around 12 key topics that form the basis for the Destination Transformation.

12 Stages of Transformation



Each month we are launching a chapter of the series according to each stage of the model, including:

- Relevant Case Studies and Best Practices.
- Relevant Talks from the #DTTT events.
- A package of Templates with relative explanatory video on how to use them.
- An online learning course to understand and embrace the digital transformation with your team.
- An Asana project plan to integrate into your workspace.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter of the Transformation focuses on unlocking the potential of partnerships to build the narrative around and amplify the power of the brand. The first focus of this chapter is the creation of partnerships: building the right partnerships requires a lot of attention not to jeopardise the consistency of the brand of the DMO.

Hence, it is important to look into the brand match and how the brand identity of the partner can align to the DMO's brand, as well as finding the right partner for the desired target audience. After explaining the criteria to evaluate the right partner, a series of best practices and examples will be presented, grouped under different kinds of alliances in the travel industry.

The first examples are related to content partnership, focusing on creating amazing engaging content and distributing it through the right platform. Then, a few examples of industry partnership and how to make the most of the alliances with other players in the travel industry will be explained.

With a major focus on the target audience, the focus will shift on niche partnerships, paying attention to how to reach out to segments of the markets that have specific interests and characteristics. Nowadays, it is also relevant to focus on sustainability and innovation partnerships, built to enhance the role that the DMO plays in keeping up with sustainable and innovative trends in the market.



PARTNERSHIPS IN DESTINATION MARKETING

Different types of partnerships and their value to the DMO

Brand partnerships are one of the greatest untapped opportunities for DMOs. When partners join budgets, creative assets and a market strategy, there is a huge opportunity to boost demand and have a real impact throughout the visitor cycle, from early-stage awareness-building right through to realising that in bookings.

To get the right partners on board, it is essential to own a good deal of creative scoping, entrepreneurship and pitching. As a DMO, your strength is in being the creator, investing in powerful compelling storytelling and offering a rich brand experience. In this report, different kinds of partnerships and alliances will be presented.

Content Partnership

Sponsored content is the intersection of native advertising and branded content. But what is branded content? Branded content is content that does not involve traditional advertising. It can include articles, videos, podcasts, and even live elements that bring relevant value to the user. Branded content marketing focuses on people, their stories, their lives and their link with the brand of destination.

Industry Partnership

With an industry partnership, the aim is to build an alliance within the travel industry that can positively impact different players that share the same ambition. Wonderful opportunities are offered by partnering with attractions and service providers; yet, the most relevant partnership a DMO can build to drive tourists to the destination is with transport providers.

Niche Market Access Partnership

If the goal of the DMO is to get access to a segment of the market with niche interests and specific qualities, the best partnership happens with brands that position themselves as leaders and authorities for that specific market. The idea here is to take advantage of the already established reach of the partner to become authorities for all those people that belong to that particular niche market.

Sustainability-led Partnerships

Sustainability is becoming increasingly critical for any type of organisation. Moreover, the number of businesses and organisations that are committing to encourage a sustainable way of operating is rising. Hence, DMOs have an important role in advocating sustainable development for the whole destination, adjusting their strategy, setting the right parameters and strengthening, together with the rest of the industry, the responsibility to act for the common good.



Innovation Partnerships

These are the partnerships that aim to boost innovation and enhance the adoption of new technologies. It might sound impossible - or maybe it is - to have the resources to keep up with the daily technological advancement. In this case, establishing partnerships with leaders in the tech industry could be a great way to come up with a highly-advanced product.

Criteria to evaluate partners and set your goals

When selecting your partners, you want to assess them in relation to your organisational values, expectations and ambitions. The authority is the value that your DMO will benefit from as a result of a successful collaboration with your partner. The authority is represented by the audience reach, the market share, the expertise and the media of your partner. Identifying the right partner means paying attention to four key elements: the brand match, the audience match, the reach and volume, and the richness and depth.

Brand match

First and foremost, ensure the relevance of your partners' brand for your brand. You need to identify the perfect brand match. If the connection between DMO and partners is not strong, it may not be worth time and investment.

Audience match

Ensure your partner is guaranteeing you the access or a wider reach to the audience you are aiming to target. Consider your partner as a further channel to reach out to that specific segment of the market that you want to attract and that will bring high-quality visitors to your destination.

Reach and volume

The media you choose to work with need to ensure the right reach and volume in the segments or markets you are trying to reach. It is, in fact, essential to establish a critical mass that makes the time and budget invested worthwhile.

Richness and depth

Building a successful partnership is the opportunity to create something mind-blowing. Working with great partners has nothing to do with the ordinary work, but needs to be considered as something unique, the greatest opportunity your DMO has to create high-quality content and unforgettable products and experiences.

Additionally, the best way to build the most successful partnerships and alliances is by following these three key steps:

1. Recruit the best partners following the four criteria presented above. Encourage a fair and transparent collaboration, create a great sense of community of people that work together for the same outcome.
2. With a plan and a great 365 calendar for processes, achievements, deadlines and the right measurement methods in place, you know what to expect from the short-term mission and long-term vision.
3. Be ready to reach compromises and agreements with your partner, but never forget the full-picture. Your brand is the most important thing and should not be affected. Retain control over quality and creativity and manage the activities according to the contract.

RECRUIT YOUR
ALLIES

PLAN YOUR
STRATEGY

MANAGE YOUR
BELONGINGS

CONTENT PARTNERSHIPS

Content creation and distribution have become a major priority for DMOs, both in understanding how to get the necessary in-house skill set, which will allow them to become year-round content creators, but also how to distribute.

With so much focus on 'up-skilling' DMOs, some are struggling to find their way through all the considerations when it comes to distribution. In the following section of the report, we're looking at how content distribution can be boosted by establishing great partnerships - especially from an editorial point of view. Through this, you can achieve different goals, from creating large-scale awareness at the 'top of funnel', to letting your audience discover the secrets of your destination with innovative content.

Choosing the right media is all about finding a partner that can truly express the potential of what you want to communicate and will be a great means to reach out to your target audience - this does not always mean working with influencers. It all comes down to measuring what authority that publisher has amongst the audience you're trying to target and ultimately asking the question: "does this publisher hold more authority as a voice, than more obvious digital publishers like YouTube or Instagram promoted content?"

A selection of the most relevant content and editorial partnerships will be presented in the next paragraphs.

Brand USA & The Telegraph

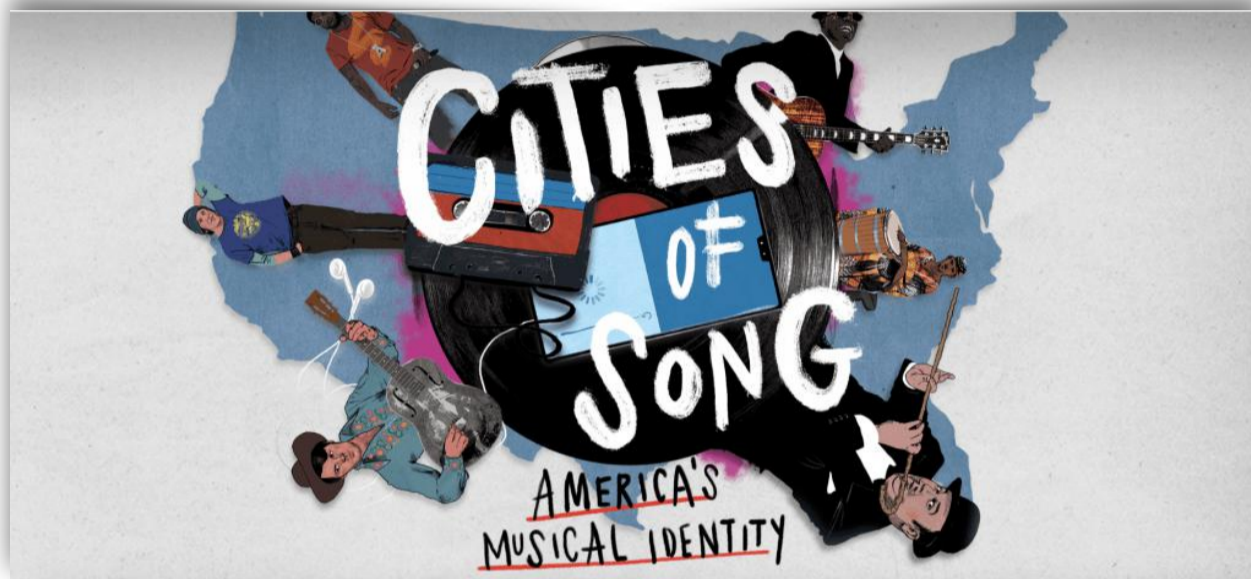
An example of a longstanding partnership is between The Telegraph and Brand USA. They have been collaborating together for 5 years to celebrate the diversity of the USA illustrated through the theme of music across 4 successful campaigns. The aim of these collaborations is to showcase America's rich music history. The various iterations of the collaboration is to illuminate how culturally complex the United States is and how there is an interesting interplay with of various cultures. These various programmes also demonstrate a more practical side to trip planning, as they elaborate how/when the user can participate in these musical experiences.



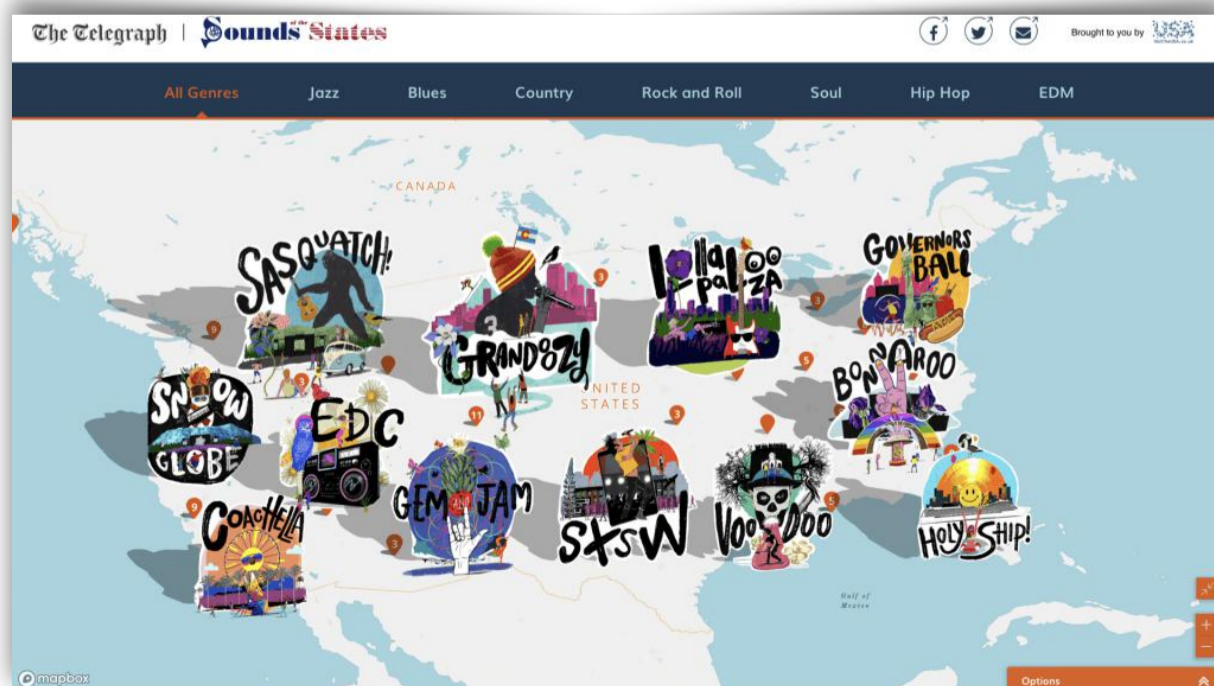


The first campaign promoted the '[History of American Music](#)' through an interactive webpage with a unique scrolling feature that lets you navigate through time and learn about the historical highlights of music, in the USA. What is interesting is the integration of a Spotify playlist to listen to the music while you read the articles.

Music is a huge part of American culture and over the years, Brand USA continues to champion this through campaigns promoting everything from the history of American music to local emerging artists from various cities around the USA. It successfully uses its musical culture to engage with international travellers through interactive campaigns and compelling storytelling, and this is all made possible through a strong brand partnership.

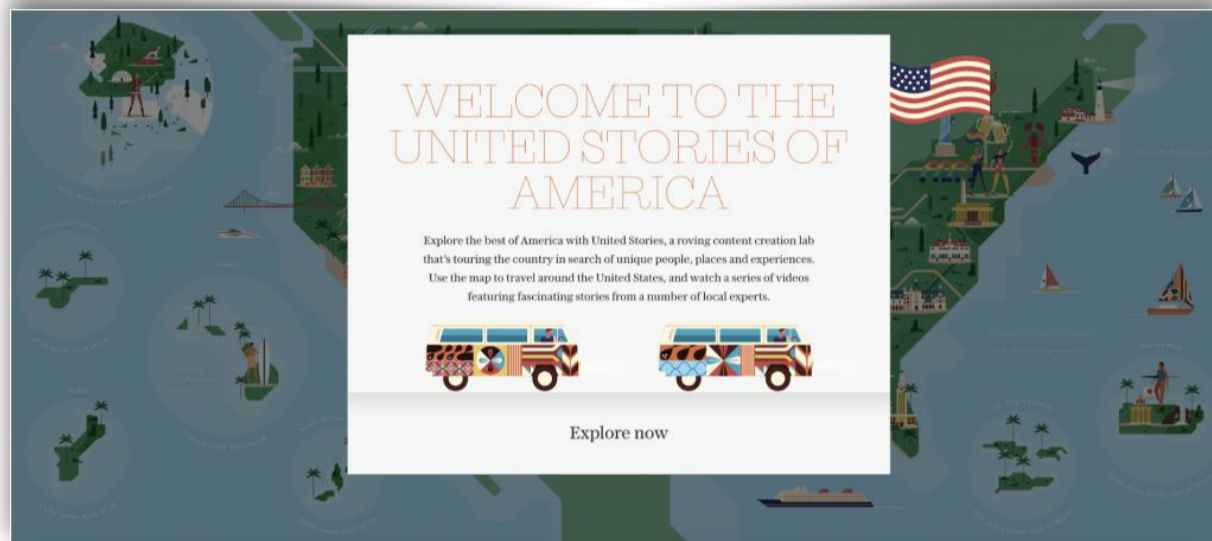


The second collaboration, named [Sounds of the States](#), features an interactive map which allows users to navigate their way around the major music festivals of America; and a print supplement that acts as a travel guide to seven American cities. Hence, the Map indicates to the potential customer the various historical music sites that are connected with the genre/festival of their choosing. Thus map indicates the wealth of musical history sites in America. Again, reiterating, the wealth of cultures in the United States.





This campaign was highly successful as the 'Sounds of the States' achieved a click-through rate to relevant offers and trips of 5% and an 18:1 ROI ratio. The third collaboration, “Cities of Songs”, uncovers America’s musical identity and allows readers to explore the iconic cities that define the country’s musical legacy, such as Atlanta, Denver, Nashville, San Juan, Portland and Houston.



The SEO-led digital features offer in-depth analysis on the wide range of destinations across the country. The fourth collaboration with the Telegraph is “United Stories of America”, a campaign built on the concept of strong storytelling and designed to inspire travellers through the portrayal of local people, stories and experts on a road trip around the USA, promoting the best visitor opportunities and unique character of each destination around the country.

This partnership has developed further involving collaboration from Beautiful Destinations on the creation of videos, called the 'United Stories'. Over the Course of 2019, Beautiful Destination will search all over the United States and document people, places and experiences that define the American travel landscape.

Tracy Lanza, Vice President of Integrated Marketing at Brand USA, joined us at [#DTTGlobal](#) 2019 to talk about succeeding with digital content partnerships and the DMO's emphasis on this tool within its content strategy.

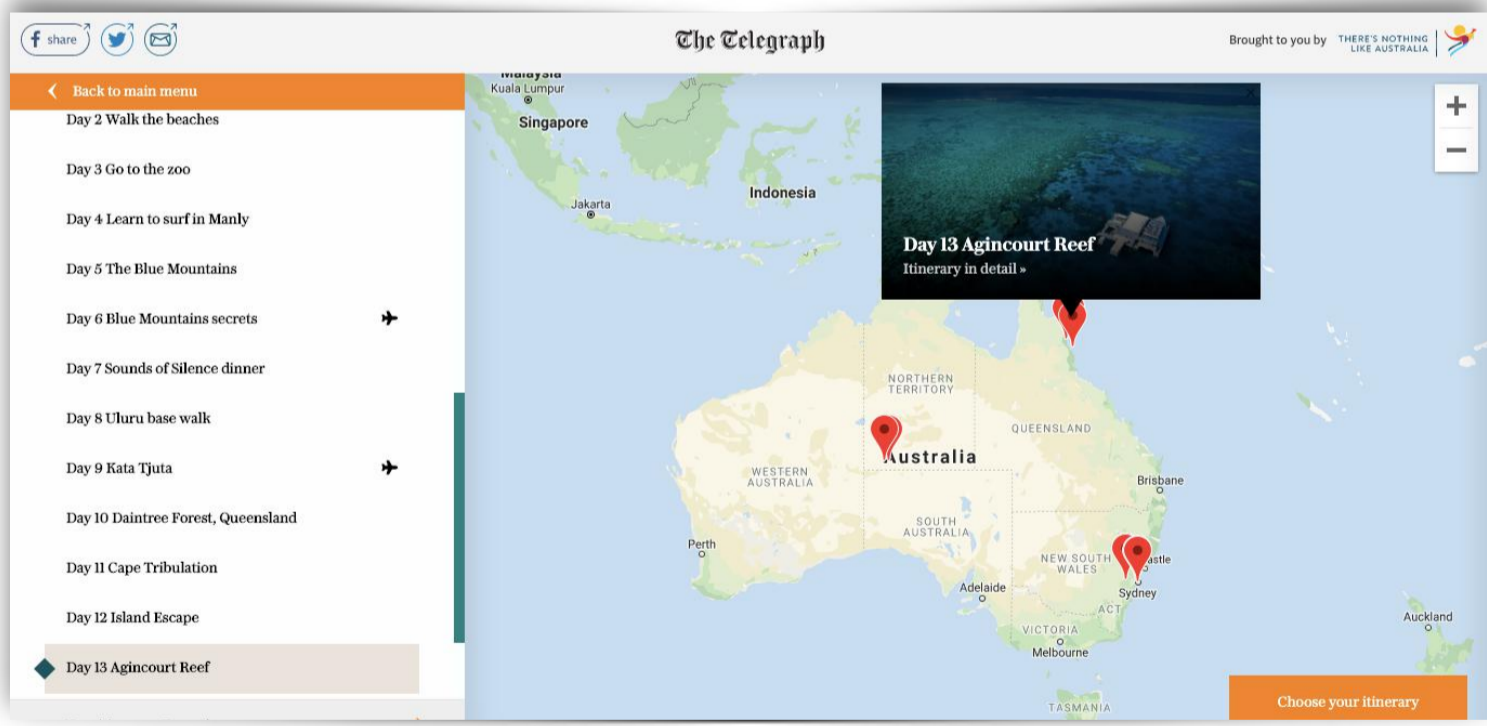
Tourism Australia & The Telegraph

Tourism Australia partnered with The Telegraph in April 2016, as a part of 'There's Nothing like Australia' campaign. The campaign aimed to indicate the abundance and variety of attractive destinations in Australia. Tourism Australia registered that over half of visitors from the UK would eventually return to the destination again. Visit Australia investigated what encouraged return visits and found out that the desire of further discovery, the feeling they had only seen a snippet of Australia, pushed visitors to come back. Not only did returning customers want to see even more of Australia, but they were also curious to take part in more authentic experiences. Hence, 'There's Nothing like Australia' campaign is set out to highlight the wealth of experiences that could be had, postulating the need to spend about a fortnight in the country to truly live it at its best.

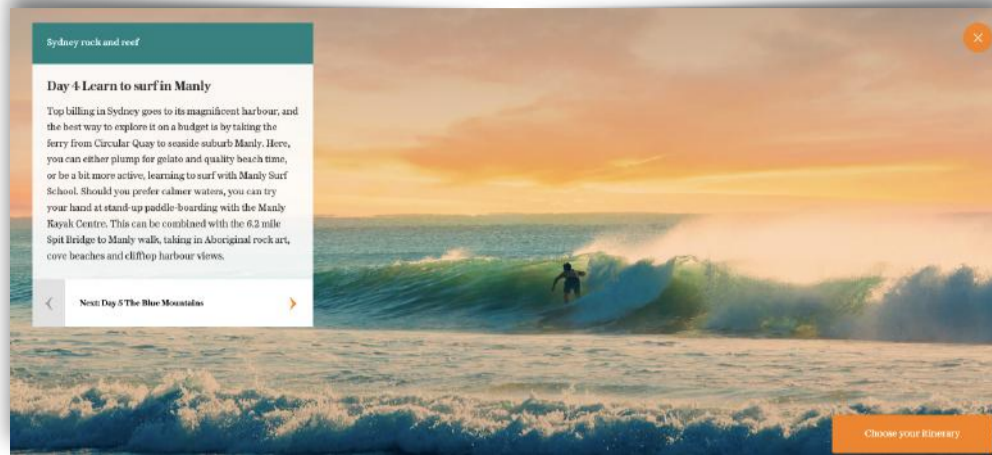
The Telegraph communicated the range of experiences that could be had in Australia, by exemplifying eight different 14-day itineraries through an interactive travel guide. The itineraries can be chosen based on the user's specific interest, such as the 'Motor Home Adventure' or 'East Coast Luxury'. The travel guides that the Telegraph have produced are highly detailed and curated. Each itinerary does elaborate on the vast amount of sights and activities that visitors can experience day by day. For example, a day in the blue mountains for eco-tourists could be spent spotting wild Kangaroos or, for more thrill-seekers, abseiling or canoeing.



Furthermore, to ensure that the potential customer receives a more rounded perception of Australia, a range of traditions is showcased within the travel guides. For instance, aboriginal art and culture play a significant part in all eight of the travel itineraries, countering the perception that a visit to Australia will entail purely exotic wild life and sandy beaches.

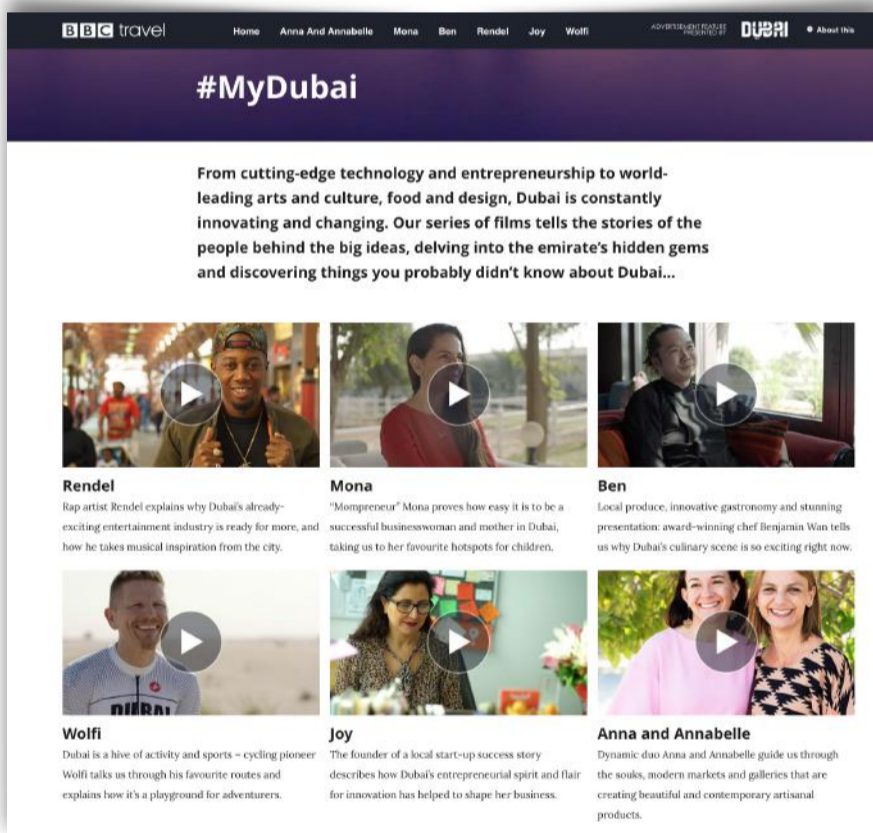


Similar to the Brand USA partnership with The Telegraph, an interactive map has been utilised. The use of these interactive travel guides portrays where each activity is located and show that multiple states are visited in one trip. Ergo, the interactive map demonstrates that the coast is not the only place of exploration, again, reiterating the user's more complete experience of the country.



Furthermore, the partnership between Tourism Australia and The Telegraph targets to the European audience, primarily the British, showcasing the (relative) ease of flying to Australia. Hence, this partnership is meant to boost Tourism Australia's partnership with Cathay Pacific, which enabled daily flights from the UK with a stopover in Hong Kong, to six different Australian airports.

#MyDubai - Visit Dubai & BBC



In this best practice, it is the highly influential British Broadcasting Corporation to provide the means and channels to distribute content to promote the destination. Dubai Tourism has always demonstrated great attention to data and insights in putting together new strategies and creating new content - remember the amazing campaign to increase visits and spent by the Chinese market. For this reason, it is worth considering that, once again, data confirmed that the UK market has been ranking within the top visitor markets of the destination, at least over the last decade; moreover, a lot of Britons are leaving the UK and moving to this UAE city for better opportunities.

This demonstrates the importance of targeting the right audience through the right channel and with the best content. What better opportunity than creating an ad-hoc campaign for the UK audience through one of the main British broadcasting channels? Visit Dubai has put together a campaign called [#MyDubai](#), that has been published by the BBC on their travel website. The campaign consists of a series of six stories, natively integrated as sponsored content.

At the DTTT, we consider it a great example of serialised content living in and out of the publisher's main channels. The series has a focus on depth, discovery and quality, to enhance the authenticity of the link between the content you can find online and what you can experience in the destination.

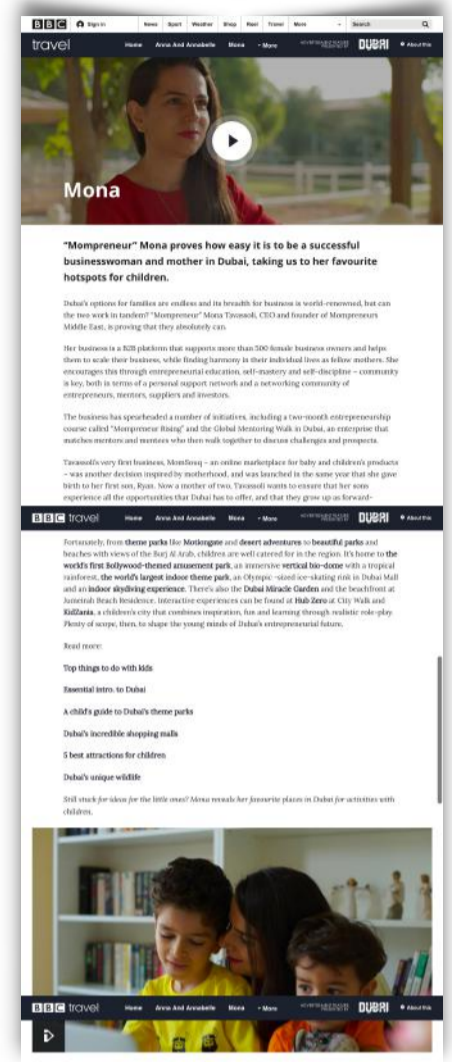


The result of this partnership is the creation of a brand identity for Dubai, with a richness of information and storytelling that lead the thematic discovery of the destination, all related and linked to the DMO's own content.

On BBC Travel, the user can get to know the stories of six people that are behind great ideas that were born in Dubai, from cutting-edge technology and entrepreneurship to world-leading arts and culture, food and design.

This time, the people that have been chosen to represent Dubai are not celebrities, but common people, and are not Emiratis, but Expats. The user can learn about each person watching a video interview or reading a blog article in their own dedicated page. Every page also presents a selection of activities, guides, tips that are linked to Visit Dubai's visitor website, enriching the offering and revealing the consistent presence of the DMO behind the whole campaign.

In this way, a loop of discovery is created between the BBC and Visit Dubai's channels that bring the users through a rich and personal discovery of the destination.



#MyMicroGap – Visit Britain & VICE

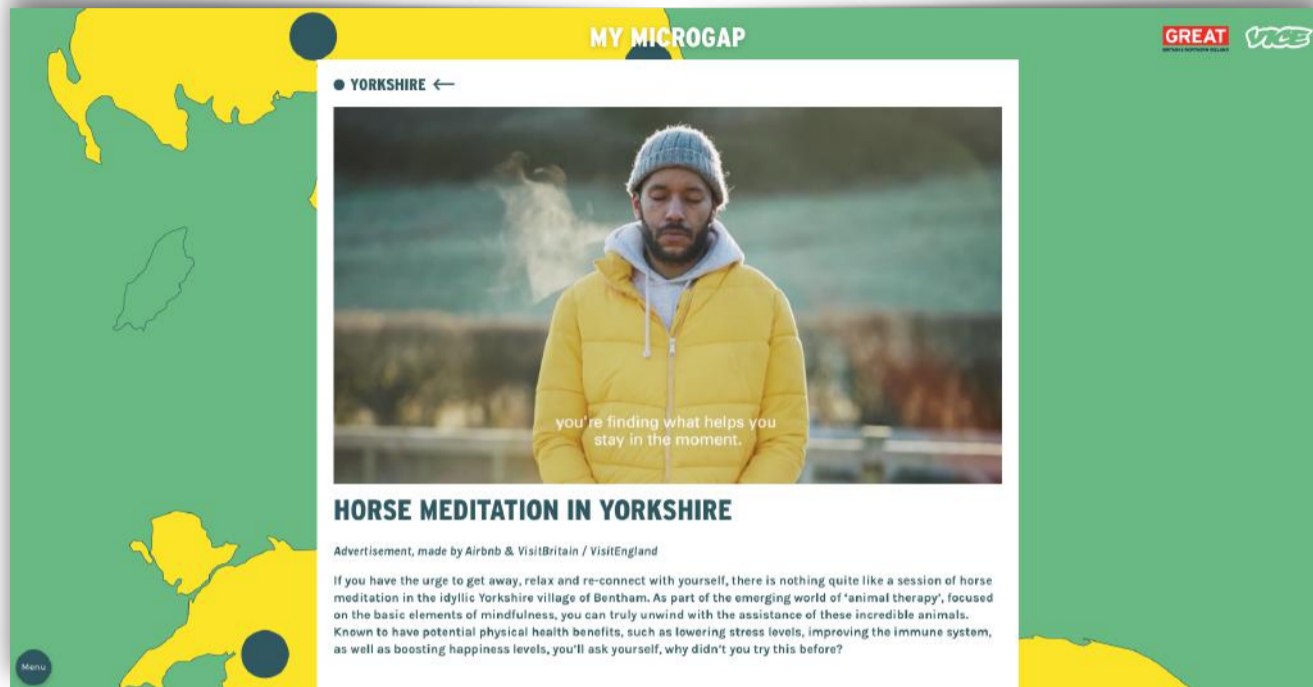
With [#MyMicroGap](#), Visit Britain promotes micro gap opportunities, targeting the domestic market, with a particular focus on youngest generations - i.e. 18-34 year olds from Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The aim is to encourage the target market to spend their short breaks visiting their country, rather than travelling to other destinations. Nonetheless, statistics show that less and less young Brits spend their holiday at home, generating a negative impact on the British economy, where domestic tourism is worth £86 billion. Thanks to VICE, Visit Britain has developed the concept of the 'MicroGap' further.

“Working with destinations and tourism businesses we want to ignite the passion for domestic travel in young people, inspiring them to take a holiday at home in the UK right now and throughout their lifetimes, boosting the economy now and driving growth from tourism in the future.” Clare Mullin - VisitBritain/VisitEngland Director of Marketing

The 'Micro Gap' lasts around one to three days and takes place in the UK. The video that Vice produced for Visit Britain elaborates on the concept of spending time in one of the British destinations to live an invaluable experience. The campaign started in October 2018 and videos were released over the course of the year, on various platforms, such as the Love GREAT Britain YouTube channel and other bloggers' that visit England partnered with.



The video demonstrates that there is vast range of activities and experiences in the UK, which can be undertaken at any point, as they are short but extremely valuable for the individual. The concept is clearly in contrast with the gap year, signifying that a culturally rich experience can be discovered in the UK without taking a long time off work or school.

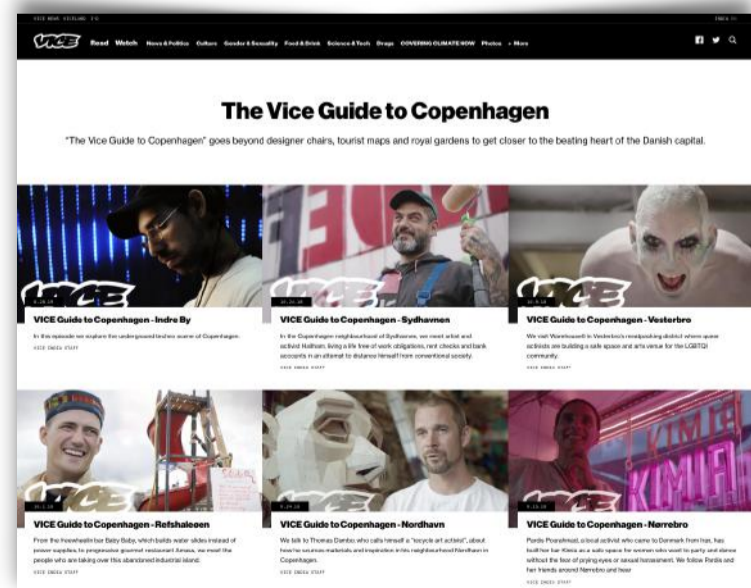


The aim of the partnership is to reach out for those people that are looking for fulfilling experiences and that are ready to learn new skills, meet new people, discover the local culture, support a good cause or embrace a challenge.

The dedicated website is made up of an interactive map with 12 main destinations. Each destination includes related content, to be watched and to be read: the VICE video showcases the experience that marks that specific location and the blog article describes the whole activity more in details. There is also a call to action to generate bookings through service and activity providers' websites.

The VICE Guide To Copenhagen

In 2018, the online magazine Vice launched the first video of an utterly unique series in partnership with Visit Copenhagen, “[The VICE Guide to Copenhagen](#)”. This series represents an alternative way of exploring the Danish capital by meeting local people who have come up with unusual ways of shaping their neighbourhoods. This is a journey across six different neighbourhoods, discovering the most interesting untold stories, people can explore the techno scene of Copenhagen or get to meet the amazing people who are taking over the industrial island of Refshaleøen.





Visit Copenhagen IGTV

Relying on the content created by VICE, Visit Copenhagen managed to get out outstanding videos that speak to the youngest generation, showing the uniqueness of the city and telling the incredible authentic stories of local people.

All the videos have been created in different formats in order to suit all the main social media channels; for examples, the series has become part of the content of Visit Copenhagen IGTV, consisting in 6 vertical videos, subtitled in order to allow the viewing with the sound off.

Video content performs well on social media channels, hence the series had great success both on VICE's channels and Visit Copenhagen's ones. Reach has increased the visibility for the destination and has targeted the millennial audience with rich, interesting and engaging storytelling. This initial stage that included the creation of Hero Content has generated the hype around the destination's channels - website included - giving the change to continue the creation of extra, more traditional content.

Main Takeaways

- To reach the audience with the right message, relying on big brands is not enough. The DMO should provide amazing storytelling-led, brand-driven content, that could represent a wealth of valuable content for the partner as well.
- Every segment of the market corresponds to the appropriate means to distribute content and promote the destination. The DMOs mentioned above have selected the publisher according to the audience - and this is the first element that has been taken into consideration.
- It is essential to think outside the box and create campaigns that have actually the chance to perform high engagement, with more interactive features and improved UX - be unique and think outside the box. Don't limit your content partnership to adding a further means for your distribution but make the most of it.

INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

The travel industry is probably the best place for your DMO to find the greatest partnership opportunities. As it will be reiterated many many times in this report, you don't have to seek far to find the best ideas.

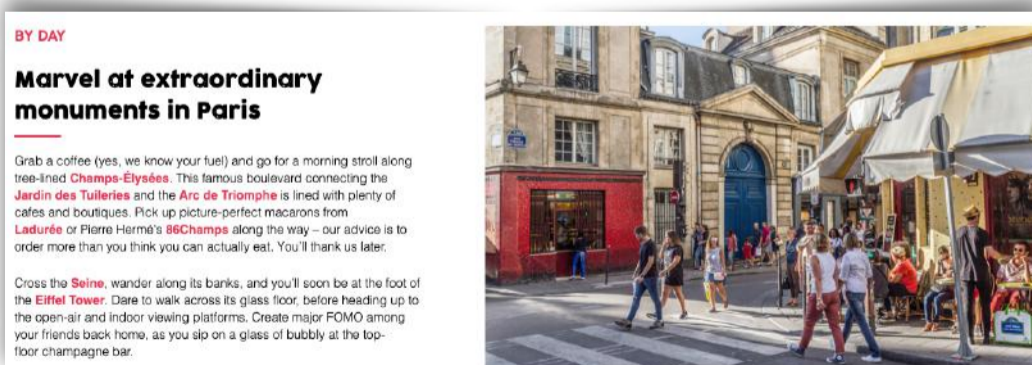
Often, the most amazing partnerships are just a formalisation of things that are already there in your destination, work pretty well and only need to be shaped, curated and boosted by the expertise of your DMO.

Many elements play a crucial role in building the right partnerships and need to be considered when we want to establish a positive relationship with partners. Geography, infrastructure, transportation may hide real gems that will catch the interest of your audience and attract more tourists.

As a DMO, you need to become a leader in your industry, applying all the knowledge you have about your destination. To do this, you need to be well aware of the stages of the visitor cycle, to make the most of the tools you already use and implement new ones. Remember to assess all the players in the industry, to see who matches the most with your brand, your values and your goals.

Visit London, Paris Je T'Aime & Eurostar

The Eurostar connection between Paris and London is only a 2 hour and 16-minute train ride. Hence, Eurostar, Visit London and Paris Je T'aime partnered together to create travel experiences, which involved both destinations, on the same trip. Together they created the [London & Paris](#) brand that provided travel itineraries that covered both destinations, in a single day. Hence, both destinations collaborated to provide information on both locations, in order to create well-crafted itineraries. Then, London and Paris brand partnered with other brands, such as Marriott hotels and United Airlines, to encourage more long-haul travellers - e.g. from the United States - to participate in a trip that involved both London and Paris.




London & Paris curated six highly-detailed and branded itineraries. All the itineraries cover the day in one city and the evening in the other. The tours are highly informative, as a result of the collusion between Visit London and Paris Je T'aime.

The suggestions listed on travel guides are highly structured and reference lots of specific attractions, sights and eateries, hence, providing the visitor with more of a local perspective, than a tourist one. Nonetheless, the essential logistics and “bucket-list” sites are still covered. Furthermore, the highly descriptive nature of the itineraries focuses on the user, easing their experience. The ease of the user is essential, considering the monumental task of fitting in two cities in a limited time. It is also worth mentioning that the ability to complete all these activities



across two cities within the space of a day elaborate on the fastness and effectiveness of the Eurostar service.

Then, to extend the reach of 'London & Paris', partnerships were made with United Airlines and Marriott Hotels. This was meant to provide a complete package for the youngest generations of the US market, who were able to fly to London or Paris daily. The partnership with the Marriott is also highly facilitatory, meaning that those who participate in the scheme receive 25% off their stay in a Marriott hotel. Hence, another aspect of the venture is already planned for the user. Similar to the itineraries the partnership with United Airlines makes the entire experience highly structured and curated.



BY NIGHT

Find wizard wonders and unique views in London

Upon arrival, walk to **Euston station** where you can board the train to Hogwarts... well, **Warner Bros. Studio Tour London – The Making of Harry Potter**, to be precise. After a short shuttle bus ride the other end, you'll soon be in a wizarding world of props, costumes, and sets from the Harry Potter film series. Wander down **Diagon Alley**, step into the Great Hall and venture into the Forbidden Forest, or see the studios dressed in their winter finest with **Hogwarts in the Snow (Nov 16-Jan 26)**.

Alternatively, head into the **City of London**, where you can cross **Tower Bridge's** glass walkway, or climb the 528 steps to the Golden Gallery at **St Paul's Cathedral** for unique perspectives of the city.

Arrive at **The View from The Shard** in time for sunset. Spot London icons from the viewing deck on level 72 of western Europe's tallest building, take that #nofilter shot, or upgrade to a champagne-filled experience. Also keep an eye out for special events, which have included yoga, silent discos, and morning raves in the past.

For a truly braggable experience, book a spot for the peculiar Ceremony of the Keys at the **Tower of London**. You'll learn more about the tower's gruesome history and watch the guards hand over the keys to the tower – tickets are booked up well in advance, so plan ahead.

End your evening with the must-do selfie in front of the dazzling LED lights at **Piccadilly Circus**, before a short stroll to **Leicester Square**, home to London film premieres, cinemas, and casinos. Strike your best red-carpet pout before a nightcap at **The Perception bar at W London**, which serves up a variety of creative cocktails.

Night-time hideaway

Enjoy a well-deserved spot of pampering in uber-cool **W London - Leicester Square**. Make use of the quirky hotel's on-demand movies and 24-hour concierge, and unwind with rainforest showers and complimentary gym access.

The brand was built upon a pre-existent concept: the opportunity, of the short transportation time between the two cities, was already there. So, the partnership for the brand 'London and Paris' was just to excellently pull together both DMOs and Eurostar's resources in order to create great content around the concept. In other words, the content was created and awareness was raised through their collaborative efforts.

Norwegian Air & Copenhagen

Partnerships with airlines are highly useful for a DMO, they improve access to the destination and thus facilitate visits. The collaboration with airlines means a new target market and thus advertisement campaigns are subsequently built around these new markets. The collaboration with Norwegian Air and Visit Copenhagen perfectly exemplify this theme.

In March 2015, Visit Copenhagen collaborated with Norwegian Air, which supplied four new direct routes from the United States to Copenhagen. The goal of the campaign '[This is Copenhagen](#)' was to highlight the essence of Copenhagen, in order to raise awareness of the destination to the new American audience, as knowledge of the city was extremely limited.

"If people don't know what Copenhagen is, then they are not going to respond to the direct flights... We wanted to give them the Copenhagen feel". Rylle Sonderstrup, Head of International Campaigns.

The campaign wanted to produce an image of an authentic experience in Copenhagen. The aim was to target Americans who were of the appropriate age and income, from four American cities. The target market



was also those who would potentially be interested in the gastronomy, culture and architecture of Copenhagen. The new American target market was found to be highly active on social media and engage well with authentic content. This led to the social-first campaign, which solely utilised user-generated content, from Instagram.

Visit Copenhagen worked with the highly-active local community to provide a large portion of this user-generated content for their 'This is Copenhagen' campaign. The Copenhagen community submitted over 500 videos, to be used in the campaign's tourism video. These videos were then curated into a fun and authentic sequence, projecting the feel of Copenhagen. Copenhagen is known for being one of the most liveable cities in the world. However, it is difficult to translate this into a video advertisement; for this reason, an Instagram competition was the best way to supply candid videos, which exemplify the genuine 'Copenhagen feeling'.



Another aspect of the campaign was the ability for users to create their own Copenhagen experience with the clips collected from the user-generated submissions. The submissions were curated into eight different categories and the user had to create their own Copenhagen experience, under three of these eight themes. The videos were put on a server, called 'This is CPH', which

automatically edited together the experience chosen by the user. Users were encouraged to participate by the chance to win two tickets to Copenhagen.

The 'This is Copenhagen' advertisement was to establish awareness of the city in the American mind. More specific retargeting efforts were then undertaken to demonstrate more personal reasons for the potential customer to come. The Norwegian flights were also highlighted as they provided the means, getting to the city, encouraging the potential customer to book.

Bogotá StopOver Programme

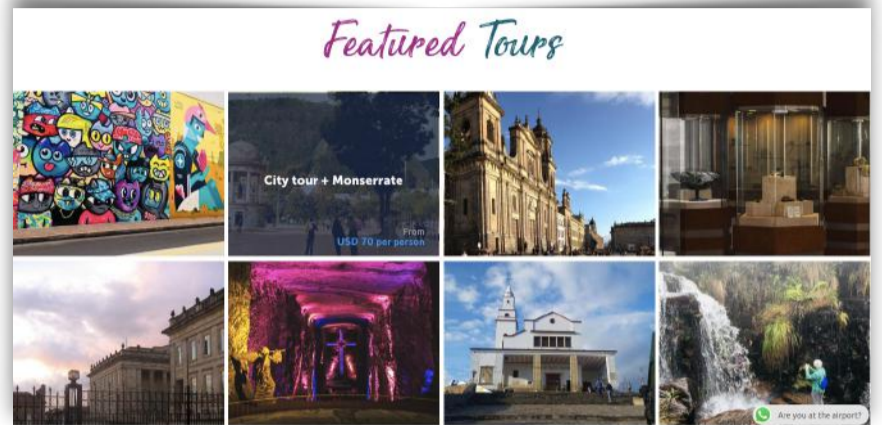
Similar to the Visit Copenhagen and the Norwegian Airlines collaboration, the Stopover programme in Bogota was made possible by an airline, Avianca. More in-depth information on the intricacies of the collaboration between the District Tourism Institute of Bogotá (IDT) and The Colombian Association of Travel and Tourism Agencies (ANATO) and Avianca, for the Stopover Programme, can be found in our Launchpad case study. Briefly, the Stop Over Programme enables those with connecting flights to explore Bogota, in their layover time, or extending their stay.

Avianca is one of the key Latin-American airlines. So, the Airline enabled broad access for potential customers to participate in the Stopover programme. For example, In 2017, thirty million people travelled



with Avianca to 100 in around twenty-seven countries. More specifically, Avianca increased the number of connections to Bogota airport, El Dorado. For example, more than 135,000 passengers, in 2018 passed through El Dorado for connection.

The [Stop Over Programme](#), also, includes thirty-eight package tours that enables the visitor to see Bogota. Thus, providing another impetus for the trip, as the exploration of the city is provided and is easily accessible for the traveller. The tours have been curated to concisely portray columbian culture. The tours revolve around nature gastronomy and culture. These experiences are also various lengths, which are suited to the short nature of the layover.

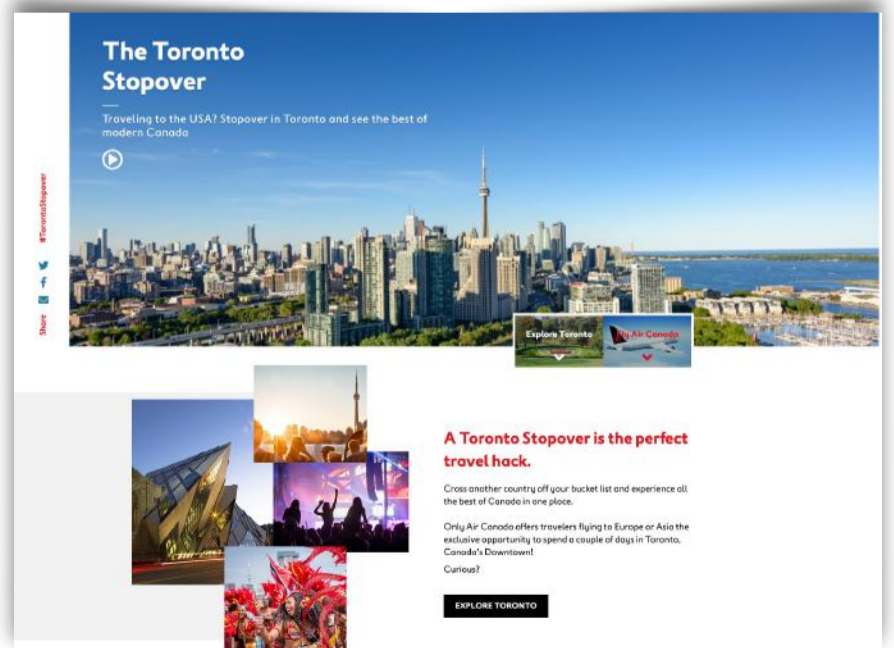


One of the facilitatory factors for the Stopover Programme was the partnership of various Colombian tourism agencies. Before the centralisation of the tourism agencies, there were similar packages available; yet, these packages had quite a limited reach and were constrained to one agencies' website, with a limited number of available experiences. On the contrary, now ANATO presents the offer to travel agencies which then advertised the programme, on various platforms. The centralisation of the agencies has laid the framework, for the agencies to work together on other projects in the future.

This example is incredibly relevant to show how DMOs can control and manage big projects with multiple players in the travel industry. For more about this, do not miss the [case study](#) we published on the Launchpad.

Toronto Stopover

In order to provide a new and more recent example on how to create a big campaign from the alliance between a DMO and an airline, in this paragraph Toronto Stopover will be presented. A partnership between Tourism Toronto, Destination Canada and Air Canada - and supported by Expedia - led to the creation of the project "[The Toronto Stopover](#)". The alliance between these organisations intends to move the attention from the idea that the city is the "Canada's Downtown" to promoting its role as a bridge to other destinations. The aim is to encourage people to consider Toronto as an attracting stopover destination for long-distance travelling between continents.





The first thing Tourism Toronto looked into was the Audience Match. The campaign was built based on data-driven decision-making; if you really want to understand your as-is situation and decide how to address your audience efficiently in the next initiatives, you need to define traveller's behaviour with some concrete and real insights.

A useful insight came from the favourite destinations in Asia for America Travellers. Once this has been defined, it was possible to target the Americans with ads in real-time, while they were looking for flights, promoting a free stopover in Toronto. This worked rather considerably, proven that the American and British public tends to love exclusive deals and offers.

Furthermore, a major focus was placed on personalisation: interests and attitudes of consumers are key aspects of the decision-making process. Hence, the campaign took place on a microsite, showcasing the offering of the destinations through inspiring content. The personalisation feature was formulated through a Trip discovery tool, a landing page that allows interaction and targets travellers with recommendations based on their preferences. To reach a wider audience with more authentic and curated content, the project involved local 'Torontonians' people, rather than major influencers, to express a more authentic call to visit the destination during the layover. Moreover, the 'ambassadors' selected for the initiative represent the interesting offering that people will seek for when travelling to Toronto, for example, "The Foodie", "The Trendsetter" and "The Action Seeker".

Did it work? Yes, it did. During the period the campaign was active, from September 2018 to September 2019, the demand for a stopover in Toronto with Air Canada increased by nearly 70%. The ROAS (Return On Ad Spend) measured 13:1 and the search for Toronto Stopover grew by 337%. As a result of the campaign, the new identity of the city of Toronto as an amazing stopover destination helped increase brand awareness and recognition.

Sweden & Airbnb

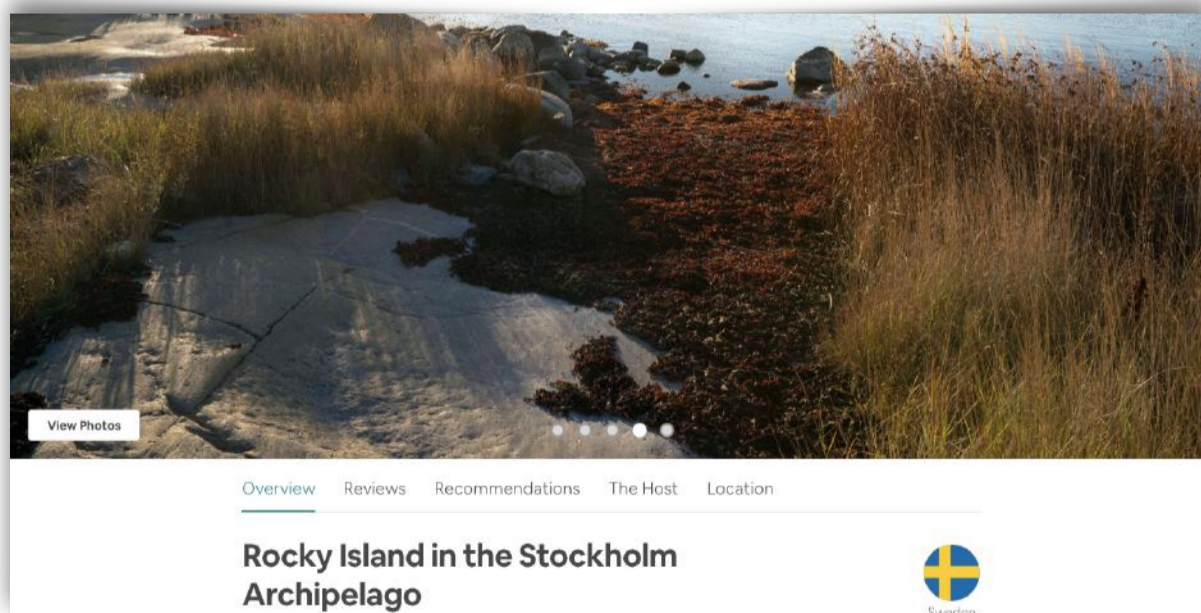
In May 2017, Visit Sweden partnered with Airbnb in an advertisement campaign. The collaboration with Airbnb was to gain publicity in their already growing North American market. Visit Sweden listed the entire country on the platform. However, the reason for the partnership with Airbnb was to introduce to a wider audience the Swedish value of "*Allemansrätten*" or "Freedom to Roam". This is what led to inviting everyone to experience the Swedish wildlife, which Visit Sweden felt resonated particularly well with the American Market.

The 'Freedom to Roam' mentality, to the Swedish, is a better version of a monument, an impressive archetype of their country. The '[Freedom to Roam](#)' is the concept that everyone has the right to be free in the Swedish nature. Furthermore, it is an established belief that Sweden's nature possesses all of the requirements and amenities that a home should offer. Hence, the whole country was listed on Airbnb as it has all that is needed by the visitor to leave the most amazing experience. The listing of the country indicated the Swedish connection to nature, which Visit Sweden believes is one of the main attractions,

especially for the U.S. market. Of course, listing Sweden as a whole is a way to make people discover the other actual 13,000 listings in the country. The user will still see 'ordinary' accommodation already listed on Airbnb.



The cooperation with Airbnb aimed to showcase other areas of Sweden and encourage visitors to go to Sweden to visit extraordinary places outside of Stockholm. The highly evocative images express the beauty of the Swedish countryside, from forests to beaches. Hence, Visit Sweden utilised Sweden's beautiful countryside scenery to market their country and showcase their rich natural landscapes rather than urban scenarios, via Airbnb.



The main target of this advertisement campaign was consumers from the United States. The campaign's goal was to capitalise on the increasing interest of the American market in Sweden. For example, during the first quarter of 2017 arrivals from the United States increased by 40%. One of the main appeals for the American market, according to Visit Sweden is the 'belong anywhere' attitude.



“We don’t have the big budgets like other destinations but we have the progressive nature of Sweden as a brand and that enables us to be sharp and forces us to find these ideas that will really hit the hearts of the target groups”. [Jenny Kaiser](#), president of Visit Sweden’s U.S. Office

Furthermore, Visit Sweden has seen the potential of partnering with an international company, such as Airbnb. Airbnb is, of course, a well-known and heavily utilised platform; in November 2019, they had over 150 million users on their platform and 2 million people staying at an Airbnb per night. So, Airbnb's international usage enabled Visit Sweden to position their brand and destination where they felt they could have an outstanding resonance.

This initiative started in 2015 was so successful that, year after year, Visit Sweden devolved part of their budget in building big, unique campaigns like the one with AirBnB. [The 72 Hour Cabin](#) is another bold initiative to promote the [healthy Swedish lifestyle](#) and the amazing bond between people and nature. This was actually a Case Study to prove that experiencing Swedish nature can reduce stress level. Both influencers and common people have been invited and their stories and experiences in the Swedish Cabins helped create amazing authentic content. These initiatives helped the DMO acquire skills in developing strong authentic stories and building content around storytelling. This year, with “The Edible Country” the focus of Visit Sweden’s promotional effort is food, in order to demonstrate how healthy food can help cleanse the body, throughout seasonal menus.

Visit Kent’s Cooperation Programme Projects

How can a DMO remain attractive and competitive in the market? How can you boost the growth of the travel industry in your area? How can you collaborate with other destinations to combine the effort to develop an improved travel experience in your destination? So many questions, but the most important may be: "how do I fund all this?".

The public sector might help generously in creating the right opportunities to invest more in your industry for a joined and common goal. This is the case of [Visit Kent](#), a DMO that is taking the opportunity to boost the tourism industry in the county of Kent, UK, thanks to a European funding initiative. The name of the initiative is Interreg, a European funding initiative founded in 1989, that aims to support the cooperation of regions of different European Members States.

Through cooperating with partners overseas, Visit Kent has the amazing opportunity not only to boost the tourism industry in the destination but also to ensure that visitors have the best experience possible to encourage them to come back and visit other regions. In this project, with Visit Kent, other regions in the North Sea, 2 Seas and cross-Channel areas will benefit from the funding.

The funding helped build a long-term cooperation programme called Profit. The Profit project is delivered by Visit Kent in partnership with other organisations in England, The Netherlands, Flanders and France.



A quick explanation of the project: the aim is to collect and analyse big data for SMEs in the tourism sector. The opportunity lies in the chance of combining data from businesses, local and national government departments and the wider supply chain to create more knowledge and intelligence about the customer in the destination.

This has given to Visit Kent the opportunity to learn about the key pillars of their brand and look into how to express the uniqueness of the destination. This is also an incredible opportunity to establish the DMO as the leader in the industry, setting a common path for the whole sector. This is the kind of support that each DMO should practice with all the operators and stakeholders to become a centre of excellence and expertise.

Concretely this has been developed by creating a programme of coaching and training to enable pilot SMEs to understand and capitalise on the current digital and non-digital opportunities, setting a significant competitive edge. The DTTT has been part of the project, providing expertise, one-to-one coaching to SMEs and creating innovation plans in order to boost the strategy of the enterprises that have joined the initiative.

With this funding, a further project has been developed: the GoTrade Project. This aims to increase footfall across several town centres throughout partnerships, by enhancing the visitor experience in traditional markets. This is carried out by establishing partnerships of around 15-20 organisations in the UK and France, including DMOs, local councils and trade organisations.

Many other projects have seen Visit Kent's involvement. This shows that, by broadening the spectrum of possibilities and partners, it is possible to build really strong partnerships that can boost the tourism industry of different destinations, joining forces and collaborating transnationally. Furthermore, the public sectors is very active in launching new projects and initiatives that DMOs can undertake to take a step toward thriving as a leader in the industry and boost the growth.

Experience Croatia & Feel Slovenia

A further interesting partnership has been created by two tourist boards: Croatian National Tourist Board and Slovenian Tourist Board. The DMOs are working successfully together since almost a decade in order to raise awareness, inspire, and target Chinese travellers coming to Europe, to encourage them to visit both





destinations. In 2018, the project has reached an important milestone, being awarded the EU fund “Thematic Transnational Promotional Campaign for the Promotion of Destination Europe in China”.

The campaign aims to show the high-end, exclusive, luxury experience, as well as authentic traditions of these European countries to the Chinese market, which is open to the discovery of different cultures and traditions and are keen to pay more for the best experiences.

The content created for the partnership has been distributed both online and offline, on WeChat and via luxury magazines. Moreover, 2 live webinars through WeChat, online training and a roadshow in China with 2 workshops have been organised in order to provide some training and boost the success of the project in China.

“This is a confirmation of our long-standing and high-quality cooperation with our Slovenian colleagues in promoting our countries in distant markets. I am sure that our investments and planned activities, together with approved European funds, will ensure even better results that Croatia is achieving in the large Chinese market.” Kristjan Stanicic, Croatian Tourist Board Director.

Taking results into consideration, in 2018, 85,313 Chinese tourists travelled to Slovenia, up 25% year-on-year, while the number of Chinese tourists visiting Croatia reached 234,118, a year-on-year increase of 46%. The number of tourists is expected to grow further over the next years.

This partnership is not only helping the two DMOs attract tourists to their destinations with a well-established relation, but it is also boosting the bond with the Chinese tourism industry, the knowledge shared and the development of the travel industry across different borders.

To sum up, this partnership shows how you can join forces with a peer to bring visitors to different destinations combining the content in one single campaign. It also witnesses the mutual effort of attracting visitors from a specific market as well as empowering their local industry with knowledge about different markets, traditions, cultures.

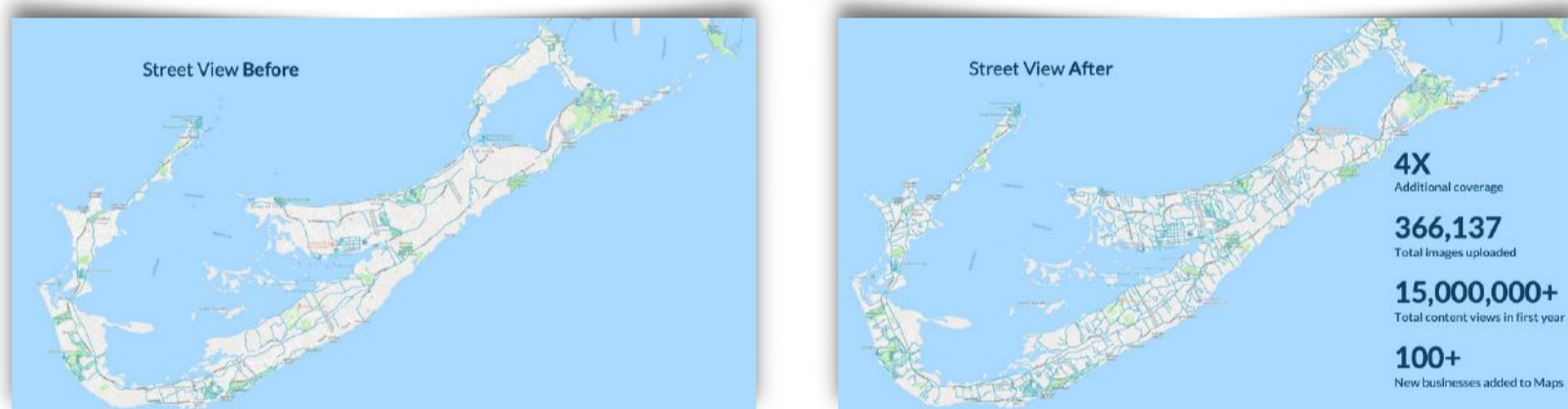
Google DMO Partnership Program

This may seem controversial; shouldn't a DMO be able to build its digital presence with its own means and expertise, without relying on big brands like Google that could obfuscate the brand identity of the DMO? Nonetheless, in this Chapter of the DMO Transformation Series, it was impossible not to mention the partnership program Launched by Google in 2017.

Google is a big player in the travel industry and the partnership program they offer to DMOs is an utterly remarkable opportunity to gain visibility and enhance the brand presence. A third party, the company Miles Partnership, has a crucial role in designing the best programme for your DMO. The Partnership Program aims to deliver measurable results inside the Google product environment, increase the organic reach of the DMO and provide unique value to local tourism businesses with training and workshops.

Exceptional examples of success in this programme are Discover Puerto Rico, Bermuda Tourism Authority or Discover The Palm Beaches. Our Launchpad includes a [Case Study](#) on how Discover Puerto Rico has rebuilt a brand new DMO after the hurricane, and a [Talk by Leah Chandler](#), Chief Marketing Officer, from #DTTTGlobal 2018, that uncovers the new strategy that differentiates the destination from its competitors, based on strong research and insights together with the Google destination program.

Moving the focus to Bermuda Tourism Authority, the DMO has taken advantage of the Partnership Program by investing in content production for Street View. Since 2015, the coverage of the destination by the official Street View content didn't change; for this reason, only a limited portion of the destination was covered, resulting in insufficient resources for way-finding and before-travel destination-discovery.



Source: 2019, Miles Partnership, Destination Marketing Organisations INVESTING IN STREET VIEW CONTENT PRODUCTION

Amazingly and for the first time, the DMO had the opportunity to update the quality of the Google tool first-hand, adding unique knowledge about the destination. The goal of the initiative was to extend the reach of Bermuda Tourism Authority beyond its owned channels and take advantage of the branding opportunities of distributing content linked to the DMO's channels and images with the actual logo. Technology played a crucial role in capturing imagery of the whole island and upload them within a month.

A further example presented in this paragraph is the case of Discover The Palm Beaches. The strategy, in this case, consisted of auditing and understanding how the consumer was using Google's ecosystem to discover the destination. Businesses in the destination were trained to understand the potential of digital and the role of their online presence as "attractions" of the destination. Once the destination had been able to establish when, where and how to distribute content on Google, it was possible to merge this with the actual marketing strategy of the destination, linking content across owned media.



This project was particularly useful for the DMO since it provided training on new technologies for the staff, it enabled the content team to assess existing content and look into their potential on Google, created a network of businesses and their data, as well as a major content wealth.

The amount of views of the DMO-attributed images is increasing day by day at a very low cost for the organisation; moreover, the quality of the content was increased by removing a substantial part of the content that was picturing the destination negatively. The authenticity of the DMO's presence on Google tools is also confirmed by the fact that businesses, once trained to become digital-driven, have claimed their profiles, achieving a rate of 89% verified compared to the average of other destinations, which is around 65%.

Other DMOs, such as Tourism Vancouver Island and Tourism Kelowna, have started to build their content strategy including the solid alliance with Google via this DMO Partnership Program. More and more destinations are recognising the incredible importance of their digital presence across different channels: first of all, their owned channels, like website and social media; but once this is done, how can you ensure an outstanding performance on external channels?

This is why it was worth mentioning the Google DMO Partnership Program in this Chapter. Any organisation can benefit from this opportunity in many ways. First, enhancing the engagement and ranking of photos on Google. Good-quality, high-resolution evocative images will inspire potential visitors and attract their interest in the destination. Moreover, Google provides your DMO with the tools to create in-destination itineraries and highlight the points of interest of your location, as well as inspire people with high-quality videos and, last but not least, populate Google with event promotion content.

Main Takeaways

- Partners in the industry are probably the easiest to find - it is important not to forget that potential partners need to reflect the DMO's brand values and working with them does not have to mean giving up the DMO own brand.
- As best practices show, the best ideas can be already somewhere around the market. Existing products, services and experiences can be developed through a strong partnership and content can be curated around it.

NICHE PARTNERSHIPS

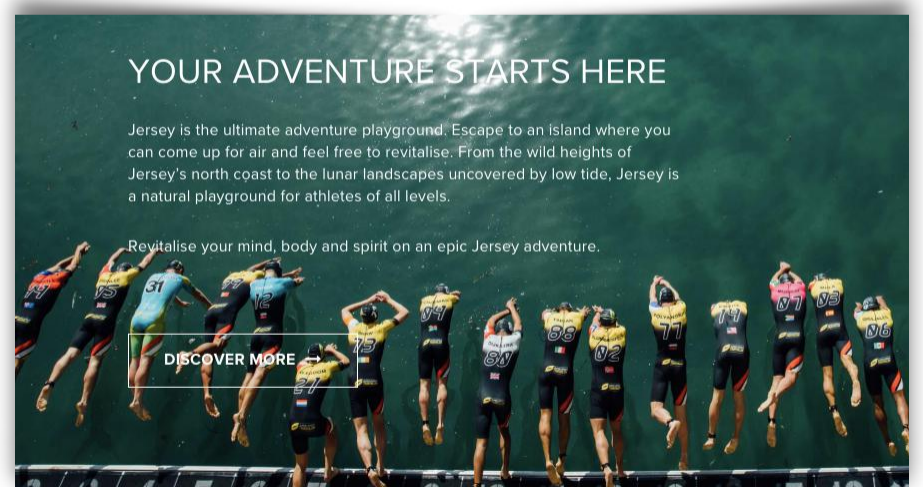
Visit Jersey & Strava

The collaboration between Visit Jersey and Strava was to target a highly specific segment of the market. Visit Jersey's specific niche audience was those who are highly health conscious and enjoy athletic activities. The result of the Visit Jersey and Strava collaboration was the '[Runcation Challenge](#)', as a means to promote the Jersey marathon and wellbeing offering, and, consequently, the island of Jersey. More information about vertical segment engagement can be found in Chapter 8 - Performance and Measurement from our 12-Stage Transformation Series.



One of the reasons for the partnership with Strava is to get access to a specific niche audience. Jersey have always positioned themselves as the right destination for sport and wellbeing, actively enhancing the offering for those interested in health and triathlon activities. Strava is an app that enables the user to track their athletic activity, through GPS, for both jogging and biking. The app is also highly used - throughout the UK around 12% of adults utilise the app. The collaboration aimed to project Jersey's image to Strava's large user base, augmenting the awareness of Jersey and encouraging participation in the Jersey Marathon. The various profiles created on the Strava app also enabled Visit Jersey to gather more data on their potential fitness enthusiast customers.

So, the collaboration between Visit Jersey and Strava led them to utilise Visit Jersey's concept of the 'Runcation'. Together, they formulate the 'Runcation Challenge' campaign. The user had to run 26.2 miles in 26 days, tracked through the Strava app. Those who completed the challenge would receive discounted entry into the Jersey Marathon, as well as discounted accommodation; moreover, two people would have the possibility of a stay in a four-star hotel in the occasion of the Marathon.

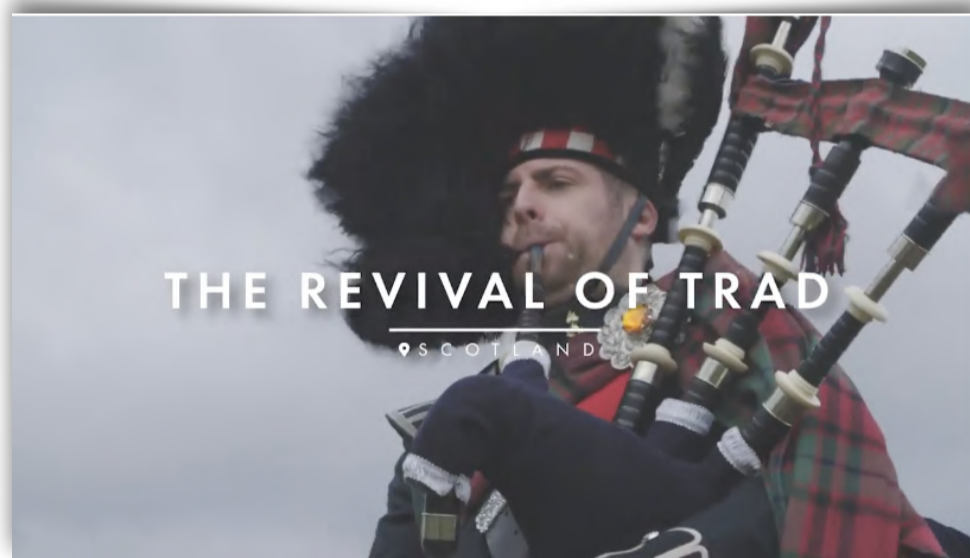




The 'Runcation Challenge' encouraged those who are passionate about fitness to take part in the Jersey Marathon, setting an objective for their training, which was part of the Challenge. Jersey is home to a wide variety of sporting events, such as the *Accuro Jersey Triathlon* and the *Breca Jersey Swimrun*. One of the key motivations for attracting a niche target audience is to increase loyalty to the experience or product. Therefore, the numerous sporting events would encourage fitness lovers to return to participate in other sporting events, increasing the number of potential returning visitors.

Visit Scotland & Contiki

At our event, Campus 2019, Contiki and Visit Scotland gave a talk on [Content Partnerships and Digital Publishers](#), to illustrate the processes they underwent in the creation of their successful partnership. Visit Scotland's key theme for 2018 was the 'Year of Young People', which celebrated the younger generations and their achievements. Hence, Visit Scotland's crucial objective for 2018 was to focus on and attract a younger audience. This target market included the 'Generation Z' and the 'Millennial' age groups. Hence, they partnered with Contiki, who create social travel experiences and caters to 18-35-year-olds: Contiki bespoke tours around Scotland and curated content around these experiences. One of the crucial goals of the partnership was boosting brand awareness and inspiration for customers for both Contiki and Visit Scotland.



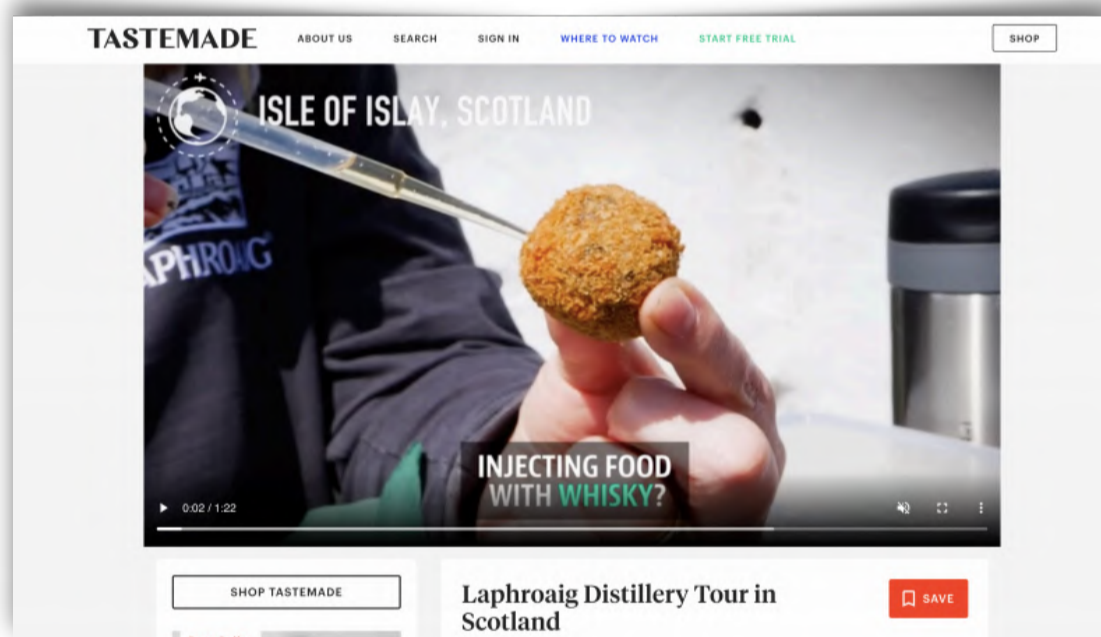
The partnership between Contiki and Visit Scotland aimed to successfully create and distribute content, addressing a young audience. Contiki and Visit Scotland's content partnership was successful because they managed to keep storytelling at the core. Contiki is consistently researching and collecting insights from the market; the company surveyed customers and found that 76% would like to incorporate music experiences into their travel. One of the key elements utilised in their strategy was traditional music, more specifically, Trad music. Trad music was utilised as the key topic of content because of the intrinsic Scottish nature of the genre. Trad music also has a large reach, considering the large portion of people with Scottish heritage, connecting the international Scottish diaspora.

One of the key tenets of the partnership was that the content produced was story-led. As part of the partnership, Contiki contracted an influencer for 'The Travel Project'. Cat Creature created a video to



showcase the Trad music tradition in Scotland; [the video](#) focused on the importance of Trad music to young people. The content delineates how Trad music rooted the young people to Scotland and was an outlet of creativity. The video, across all social media platforms, had a reach of 870,000 and an engagement of 37,000. The importance of storytelling, within the partnership, ensured that Visit Scotland and Contiki were highly successful. As from the beginning of the partnership, the aim and importance of storytelling were established.

Another distribution platform was incorporated, to access the younger audience. The video content that was produced was edited into a different format, targeting more lower-funnel visitors, into a destination video - displayed and edited by Unilad. The reach of the content was considerable: it reached 6.2 million people and was viewed by 850,000. The video was also well received and 90% of the comments had a positive sentiment. The usage of distribution platforms, such as Unilad, provides valuable insights. Knowledge of the distribution platform's key audience explained a more complete image of the younger target market. The information gathered from Unilad was also combined with the data of the DMO's customers, creating a more substantial picture of potential customers, with a particular focus on Visit Scotland's desired younger audience. Hence, access to data is a predominant theme within many DMO partnerships.



Tastemade was also involved in the creation and distribution of content. Tastemade was highly facilitatory to communicating the Contiki tours, in Scotland, to their 'Millennial' and 'Generation Z' audience. The Tastemade audience is quintessentially the young demographic, as over 60% of their viewers are between 18-34. Tastemade has an incredibly broad reach, as they have over 77 million. Tastemade produced videos on the bespoke experiences Contiki have, in Scotland. The videos, like the Unilad content, provides specific examples of the experiences that can be had on the Contiki tours in Scotland; this content lies at the lower level of the funnel.

Another channel to distribute the content created by the Visit Scotland and Contiki partnership was the podcast, 'Out of Office'. Podcasts are a well-established distribution method for content and advertisements. The reach of podcasts is extensive with 46% of 18-34 Americans listen to podcasts and spent 6 hours a week listening to them. Furthermore, podcasts can be highly lucrative, as 49% of podcast

listeners have a higher spend on retail, travel and entertainment. The aim of the podcast was to increase awareness of Contiki and to also drive engagement through inspiration, driving more specific product discovery. For example, the first episodes real talk section includes 'How young people are breathing new life into traditional Scottish music'.

One of the key overall outcomes of the Visit Scotland and Contiki collaboration was that Contiki had an 8% year on year increase on Scotland's trip sales. The content showcased authentic stories, which were highly inspirational. Moreover, the partnership was highly successful, as the platforms utilised to distribute the content were highly appropriate. The native advertisements were extremely inspirational, to 'Generation Z' and the 'Millennials', as they placed on platforms that are most poignant to those demographics. So, the incorporation of platforms such as Tastemade and Unilad were highly integral to the success of the partnership.

Tourism Australia & STA Travel

The aim of Tourism Australia and STA Travel partnership was to target a niche young audience and encourage more and more young people to take a working holiday in Australia. The partnership was part of Tourism Australia's 'Australia Inc Campaign', which encouraged young people to participate in working holidays. STA Travel was incorporated into the campaign, as they are an affordable youth travel company and provide the means to attain a 'Working Holiday'.

In addition to pop-up events, the campaign was, of course, complemented by a digital strategy. Tourism Australia created the advertisement strategy to communicate the possibility of a working holiday, in Australia, through their Australia inc campaign. Tourism Australia created several videos that express how working in Australia will give the applicant the experience of a lifetime. The advertisements sought to demonstrate that a working holiday will equip the visitor with experience, confidence and skills that will enable them to develop a career in their home country. However, they simultaneously depicted the enjoyable experience that the 'employee' will have. STA Travel was a needed partner, as they provided the means to partake on the working holiday.



Since 2010 Tourism Australia's global consumer marketing campaign, 'There's nothing like Australia', has built strong appeal with the youth market internationally. 2019, Tourism Australia.



Younger generations are one of the main segments as well as a highly lucrative market for Tourism Australia: the 15-29 demographic made up 25% of arrivals and 44% of the visitor spend. To quantify this some more, in 2018, 2.3 million young people entered Australia and they spent around \$20 billion.

For this reason, the partnership between Tourism Australia and STA travel relied on the advertising power and resources of Tourism Australia and utilised STA Travel to handle the specifics of the means to get to Australia. The niche market of the younger generations is essential to Tourism Australia, considering the amount of income they bring, into the country, as a result of these 'Working Holiday' schemes.

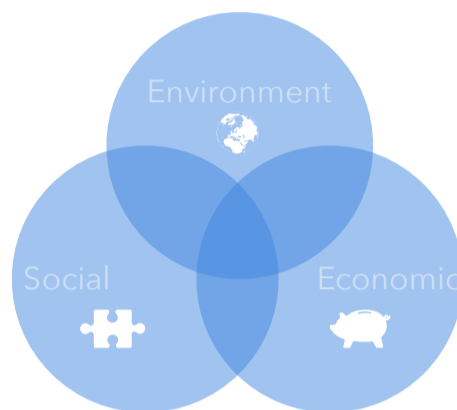


Main Takeaways

- Narrowing down the target market is an efficient way of boosting the success of a campaign; attracting a niche community, partnering with a leader in the industry makes it even smoother.
- Partnering with organisations that target a niche community allows the DMO to gather insight and expertise from a very specific segment of the market.
- This kind of partnerships allows to enhance the credibility of the brand and show the destination as a leader and centre of reference for a specific audience.
- Working on niche products allows to develop the offering of the destination further according to very specific parameters and following a narrow but exhaustive range of experience for a specific audience, increasing the chance of making them more unique.

SUSTAINABILITY-LED PARTNERSHIP

Sustainability is one of the main drivers in boosting the growth of any organisation. If, in the past, sustainability was characterised by three main components, such as economic, social and environmental, more recently, it seems that the main focus has shifted largely onto the environmental and social impacts that organisations hold, to the detriment of pure profit.



If 'sustainability' is changing its meaning, the responsibility of every individual in defending the general wellbeing in our society is not. Tourism has a humongous impact, like every industry, but it can strive to become more sustainable. Often, what is promoted through tourism is at risk of degeneration. In our travel industry, where every experience is possible, it is essential to remember that resources must be managed and communities must be respected.

The entities you decide to work with and the partnerships you establish can help you grow sustainably or have a "sustainable" impact across the industry. We shall dare say that sustainability is the new green gold and has provided us with a series of best practices that show how it is possible to collaborate in the industry, also among competitors.

Players of the same industry and competitors started to collaborate in order to encourage people to travel more sustainably. For instance, KLM, Thalys and NS Dutch Railways have joined their efforts to reduce the footprint of their customers. Often have they promised to take action against climate change, and this last initiative aims to replace flights between Brussels and Amsterdam. The plan will be effective in March 2020, with KLM, the Royal Dutch Airlines, replacing a daily service between Brussels and Amsterdam and encouraging people to take the train instead of flying, to reduce CO2 emissions.

Of course, this sounds just right: major players in the travel industry reacting to the climate emergency with a bold and audacious decision. However, the reasons leading to this can have various nature, and not only be environment-focused; for example, this can be a tactical way of decreasing the number of passengers when the supply of the airline cannot keep up with the demand of the market.

Despite the multiple factors that are crucial if we want our organisation to grow sustainably, the next example will present how organisations are taking action against climate change.



Travalyst

Stated that our society nowadays cannot live without travelling, it is time to start big and bold initiatives and drastically change the impact of travel. HRH The Duke of Sussex has led the creation of the foundation “Travalyst” together with the collaboration of some of the biggest players in Tourism, such as [booking.com](https://www.booking.com), Ctrip, Skyscanner, TripAdvisor and Visa.

The number of people around the world taking international trips has more than doubled since 2000, and is set to increase by the same number again by 2030. As more and more people travel, so too increases the impact on the environment and local communities – and the opportunities to do good with each trip we take. 2019, travalyst.org

At the heart of this idea is the importance of tourism and the creation of an alliance, which responsibilities to our planet and society are shared within. This project aims to be a catalyst for change, to encourage people to explore the world without affecting people and places.

The points Travalyst bases its strategy on are:

- The impact of tourism on the environment must be positive and long-lasting: this has to do with reducing carbon emission and eliminating single-use plastic.
- People travelling has the great opportunity to see the amazing wildlife of the destination: it has to contribute to the protection of animal and plants rather than exploitation and endangerment.
- Stress is out over the theme of overcrowding, intending to lead tourists towards less-visited destination.
- Local communities shall benefit from the economic opportunities generated by the travel industry, empowering people and supporting their well-being.

This initiative can be monitored in order to see how different players, often competitors, are taking action and how they are adapting their activities to reduce the negative footprint on the environment.

INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS

It is crucial to consider the DMO as the centre of excellence of the destination, an entity that leads and represent the development and innovation of the destination. This is why it is so important to keep up with the tech trends in the market and build a solid network amongst innovation leaders in the industry.

Innovation can enhance experiences, provide the DMOs with new ways of engaging with their audience and set the whole destination as a centre of innovation. Some DMOs have taken advantage of the collaboration with technology companies to deliver unique experiences and to enable the visitors, but also local people, to have enhanced services.

In this paragraph, a few examples will be provided - leaving a question open: is it the DMO to establish the partnership or does the initiative generate from the other party?

Queensland & Uber

In May 2019, Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) and Uber partnered to showcase the beauty of the Great Barrier reef. Users could enter a competition (or pay \$3,000/ for two riders) to have a ride in the 'ScUber'. The winners of the competition would be able to witness the Great Barrier Reef up-close, utilising the 'ScUber', at the Heron Island or the Agincourt Reef. The partnership between Uber and TEQ created an innovative submarine. The submarine, main innovation of the partnership, helped to increase awareness of the Great Barrier Reef, inspiring potential consumer's visitation of the reef.



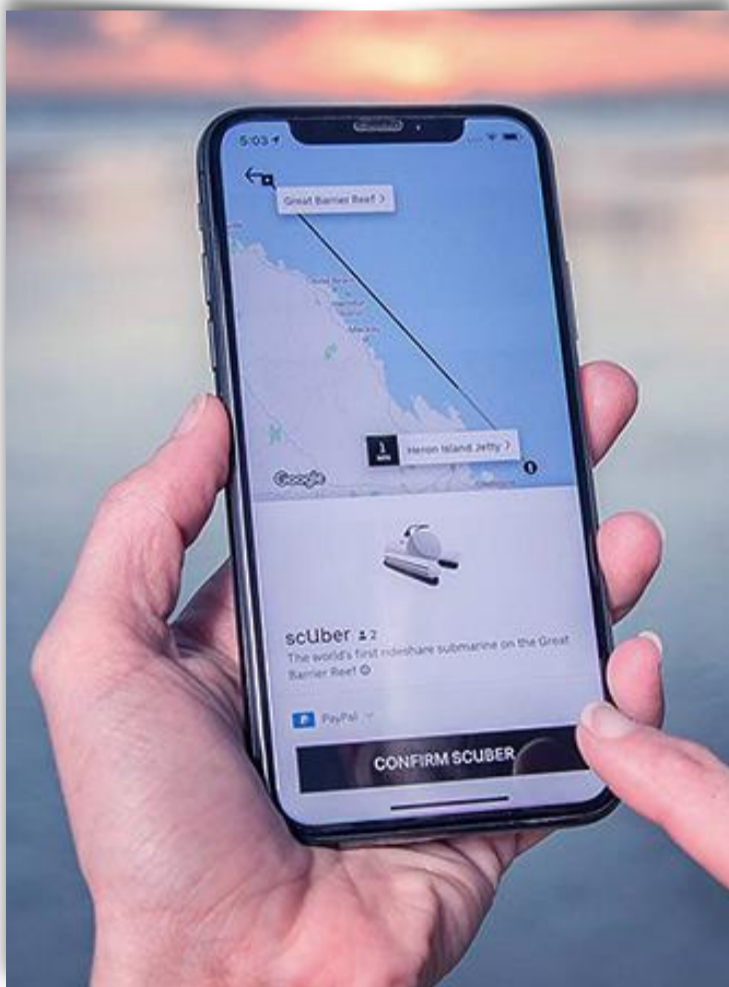
TEQ partnered with Uber, in order to create the 'ScUber'. Uber supplied the technological ability to facilitate the crafting of the submarine. Uber was able to formulate TEQ's vision of a submarine, collecting insights upon TEQ's research from 2018. The research's consensus elaborated that Submarine travel was the desired way to observe the reef. Therefore, the 'ScUber' enabled riders to witness the Reefs at depths of up to 30 metres with a 180 degrees view, tackling some of the constraints that are found with scuba-diving. The ScUber provided the public with the first opportunity to observe the reef from a submarine. The submarine, of course, was a ride-share submarine, sticking to Uber's underpinning concept.

TEQ's partnership with Uber was to bring the beauty of the Great Barrier Reef to the forefront of people's minds and to encourage potential customers to see the reef in person. The initiative also helped to raise awareness about environmental concerns about the reef. The huge presence of Uber internationally enabled TEQ to target chosen markets and successfully project their campaign to a wide public.

"We'll tap into Uber's vast customer base throughout North America and Europe to showcase the Reef". Tourism Industry Minister, Kate Jones.

In 2019 Uber had completed over 5 billion rides, in the United States. Hence, as a result of TEQ desire to encourage more long-haul customers to participate, this innovative venture was designed. Further companies have joined the 'ScUber' venture, such as the UK company 'Flight Centre' and 'Aspire Down Under USA'. Yet, the length of the campaign (between the 27th May-18th June 2019) was extremely limited.

"Queensland's tourism industry plays a key role in protecting and advocating for the reef". Member for Gladstone, Glenn Butcher.



Not only did TEQ want to raise awareness for tourism, but also to make people aware of environmental concerns. The campaign hoped to teach people how to conserve and protect the reef. In occasion of this partnership, Uber also donated \$100,000 to the charity *Citizens of the Reef*. The *Citizens of the Reef* believe that tourism is the key to conservation. The more people who visit the reef means that more people are educated about how to conserve this outstanding natural treasure.

More best Practices in Technology & Innovation will be presented in Chapter 10 of the DMO Transformation Series.

CASE STUDIES AND TALKS

San Diego Tourism Authority: Shifting to an ‘Always-on’ Content Strategy

San Diego works with a variety of relevant and brand-aligned third-party publishers such as Tripadvisor, creators such as BuzzFeed and Tastemade, and micro and macro influencers. This provides an engaging first-person perspective on the destination and experiences available, while third-party validation successfully enhances the brand message.

This strategy is successful for a variety of reasons, firstly, San Diego prioritises teamwork and communication so that partners can successfully collaborate instead of operating in silos which is much more beneficial for the destination and stakeholders alike. Secondly, San Diego Tourism works closely with market partners to ensure all parties understand the brand inside and out. Each member is provided with training and a San Diego brand toolkit which includes everything from brand language to typography and brand assets.



[Watch the case study](#)

Norwegian and Copenhagen: Partner Collaboration

This is a great example of how to succeed in Social with Industry Partners. In March 2015, [Wonderful Copenhagen](#) started a brand new and innovative campaign called 'This is Copenhagen' built around Instagram videos to showcase the city of Copenhagen. Over a two-year period, the Wonderful Copenhagen team worked on building a community and collaborating with the community.

The cooperation between Wonderful Copenhagen and Norwegian is based on new direct routes to Copenhagen opening up from the United States. This provided Copenhagen with a unique opportunity to market the city as a destination to US consumers, aiming for this demographic by attracting a mass following. Strategic stories such as architecture, gastronomy, royal/historic items of note, nightlife, green and environmental issues, traditions, design/fashion and family were selected. The aim of the campaign was then to target US consumers with appropriate age and income in four US cities. Wonderful Copenhagen has established that its target group expects authentic content and is highly active on social media. Thus, a social first approach for the campaign was considered most appropriate, and Wonderful Copenhagen followed a native social strategy - telling stories on platforms where people are present. The community project aimed to source authentic user content from Instagram through promoting the #cph hashtag in order to encourage people to submit content for the campaign. But this was also implemented in order for Wonderful Copenhagen to receive permission from all users to utilise content in their activities.



[Watch the Case Study](#)

Fjord Norway: Data-driven Partner Marketing

Partners are always important to consider as a destination. In the case of Fjord Norway, the organisation is owned by the industry, relying 30% on public funding and 70% on industry investing in their work. Fjord Norway's model is based on creating a reason to go, opening up opportunities for a larger amount of the industry, not needing a big amount of funding to get the benefits of working on joint retargeting activities. This means small, medium and large companies can equally benefit from Fjord Norway's data-driven marketing activities to generate real conversion even when investing only small budgets. Bringing in various partners, they can all be part of an automated retargeting system. This enables Fjord Norway to bring the overhead costs down and create an advantage through big buy/ spending to enable partners to have a place in the international marketing arena. Depending on the value of the investment, Fjord Norway is providing detailed reporting on the success of the activities and are planning to even give partners joint access to their systems and measurement tools.



[Watch the Case Study](#)

XGames Oslo: Real-time Marketing

This Case Study shows how Visit Oslo created a great alliance in occasion of the XGames. Events play a central role in VisitOSLO's strategy that includes large events in the city that also appeal to an international audience. For Oslo as a tourism destination, it is paramount to increase the visibility and buzz value of the city, counteracting the intensifying global competition. In February 2016, for the first time, a commercial enterprise arranged a large international sports event in Norway. For the majority of destinations, bringing large scale events with an international appeal can help to open up opportunities in existing and new target markets. However, positioning and branding a destination through an event is often only proving successful in the long-run instead of achieving immediate results.

Establishing a relationship with the event organisers allowed VisitOSLO to focus on live marketing the event, producing real-time content and Snapstories, highlighting 'behind the scenes' aspects of the games. Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter were all used to broadcast live from the event, especially during the finals and concerts. To take full advantage of the X Games and social media buzz, VisitOSLO also shared content from ESPN and the athletes on Facebook and Instagram. The combination of engaging and real-time content proved successful, triggering conversations and widespread engagement. VisitOSLO's content marketing and engagement strategy enabled the team to communicate and engage with those target groups that 'live' online and are naturally sharing and engaging with experiences.



[Watch the Case Study](#)

Visit Denmark: Creative Content Collaboration

The 'Explore Denmark' campaign was introduced in 2014 to market Denmark's city break destinations across all markets. Starting with Copenhagen as city break destination Expedia Media Solutions created a custom page to present inspiring content. The campaign targets three major source markets, the UK, Germany and Italy. The UK is a huge market for city breaks in Copenhagen and is connected well through several daily flights into the capital. Germany has always been a strong market for coastal holidays in Denmark but many don't know as much about Copenhagen as a destination. Italy is a strong and upcoming market for Denmark that shows great potential The campaign targeted cities in each of the markets that have direct flights to Copenhagen. Using Copenhagen as the bigger city and to raise awareness about Denmark's city break destinations, Aarhus was introduced as a new and upcoming destination in Denmark.

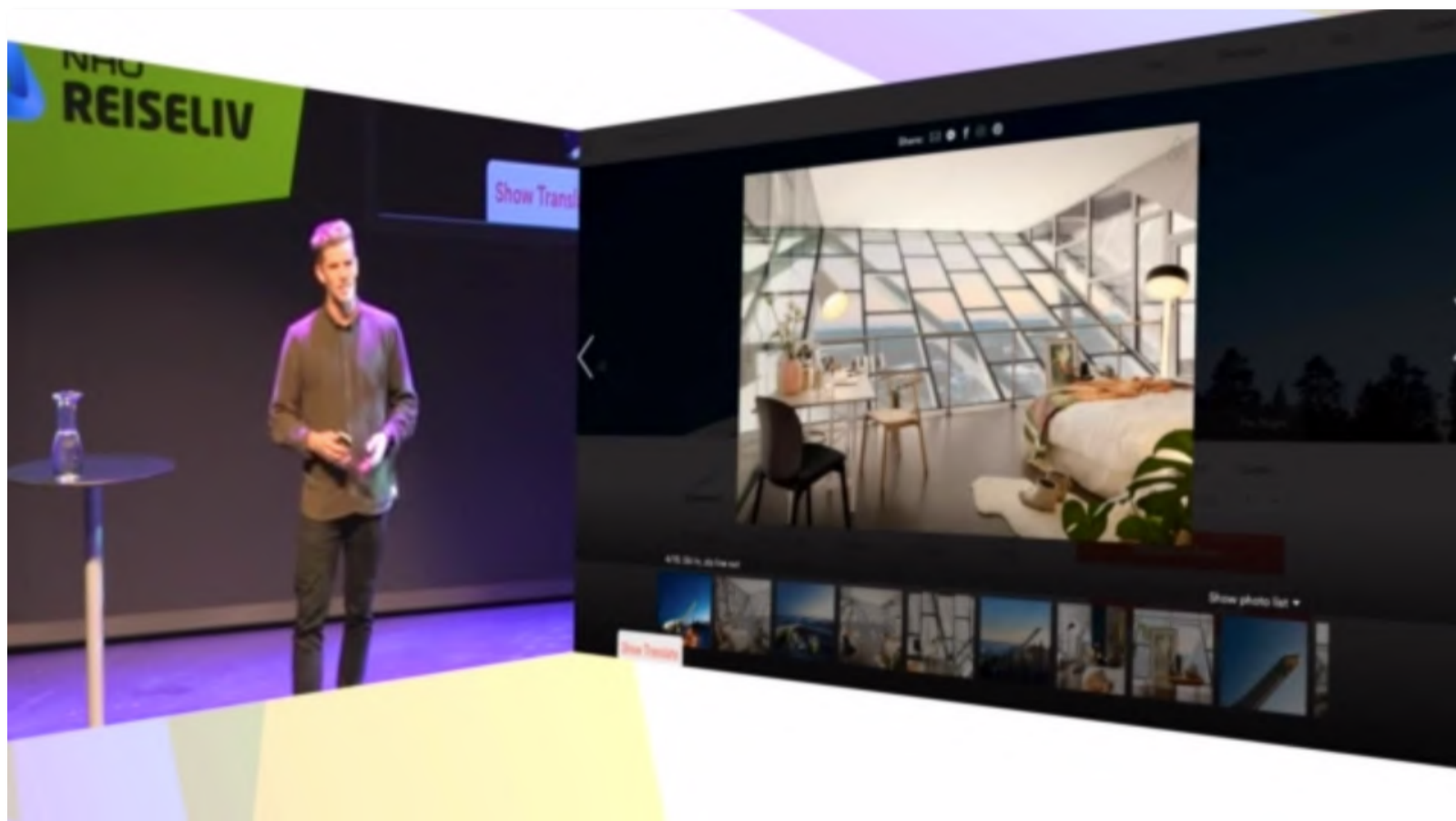
In September 2014, Visit Denmark worked with Expedia Media Solutions to take the collaboration to the next level and transform the campaign by introducing creative content to engage consumers. The 2015 campaign aimed to inspire consumers, focusing on the top of the funnel, engaging consumers through highly visual content. Although Visit Denmark does not have an iconic or powerful monument as such to use in their marketing and communications, the idea was to showcase Copenhagen in a fresh, new way by focusing on the unique atmosphere in the city.



[Watch the Case Study](#)

Holmenkollen & AirBnb Campaign

The idea for the project was simple, doing something big in Norway, raising awareness and creating something educational, that is highly engaging, shareable and likeable. AirBnB had done projects previously taking unique locations and making them bookable for once in a lifetime experiences. These initiatives became known as the Night In. In Norway, nature, winter and sports are the mature topics. Holmenkollen, therefore, was the right location to create something unique. With the buy-in from Holmenkollen, the transformation of Holmenkollen's viewing point was started. The AirBnB team together with locals were organising an amazing experience for the winning guests.



[Watch the Talk](#)

How to ace your Brand Partnerships

Contiki, the world's leading youth travel company have been working hard to stay on point when it comes to engaging with the millennial audience. Now more than ever that means adopting a content led approach and re-positioning the Contiki Marketing Lab to thinking like a publisher.

David Meany, Head of Brand Partnerships at Contiki talks about how they've been managing content partners with tourist boards and brands to drive awareness and ultimately drive sales on bookable product. David shares how DMO's can break out of their traditional "book now" tactical partnerships cluttered with print and digital banner ads to creating engaging content partnerships which truly resonate with difficult to influence a millennial audience.



[Watch the Talk](#)

Contiki and Visit Scotland - Content Partnerships and Digital Publishers

Contiki and Visit Scotland joined us to discuss the challenges of communicating a largely intangible product by successfully bridging the gap through emotive storytelling and hyper-relevant content.

They share insights on telling authentic stories from a different angle, finding the story and the angle, and the importance of distribution when it comes to reaching key audiences.



[Watch the Talk](#)

Visit Indy's 100% UGC Strategy with CrowdRiff

Jeff Robinson, Director of Marketing at Visit Indy, talks 100% UGC content together with Amrita Gurney, VP of Marketing at CrowdRiff. In 2014, Visit Indy made a bold decision that that year was going to be the last to run a 'traditional' ad campaign, and the start of a 100% digital / UGC marketing strategy. CrowdRiff now works with over 500 brands providing a searchable and shareable platform of content, and for Visit Indy, this is now an intrinsic part of its marketing program.

Here they discuss everything from challenges such as acquiring content and photo permissions, to how this new strategy has improved click-through-rates, learning trends from the platform itself and setting itself apart from the competition.



[Watch the Talk](#)

Creating Social Partnership Framework with Industry

Vancouver Island and CrowdRiff have been working together over the past 2 years, and joined us to discuss how to encourage more UGC as part of your social strategy. In particular for the modern traveller of today, looking at how to engage more frequently with your key audiences, inspire social sharing, and most significantly, how to build collaboration and coordination across the destination as a whole.



[Watch the Talk](#)

Understanding Consumer Social Content Needs with Chute & New York City & Co.

Today's traveller is busy, distracted and yet more informed about the places they want to go than ever before thanks to social media. Chute conducted a study to understand the challenges destinations face when seeking the attention of potential travellers. Jody shares the results of the study, covering the social media platform and content preferences of travellers, reasons why travellers aren't following destinations on social, and more. Jason share examples of how New York City has tackled these evolving needs to meet tourists where they are, across marketing channels - from web to social to OOH, and now most recently using bots.



[Watch the Talk](#)

Helsinki Airport's focus on innovation

Finavia thinks differently - it is all about the passenger's total travelling experience, involving all operators along the chain collaborating to provide a seamless travel experience. Helsinki is planning for 30m passengers by 2030 and Finavia are looking to accommodate this growth by taking advantage of digital elements.

Eero Knuutila, Head of Sales Development at Finavia, joined us at #DTTTGlobal to discuss the pros and cons of this growth and building an ecosystem with AI and Data at the centre to support it.



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TEMPLATES

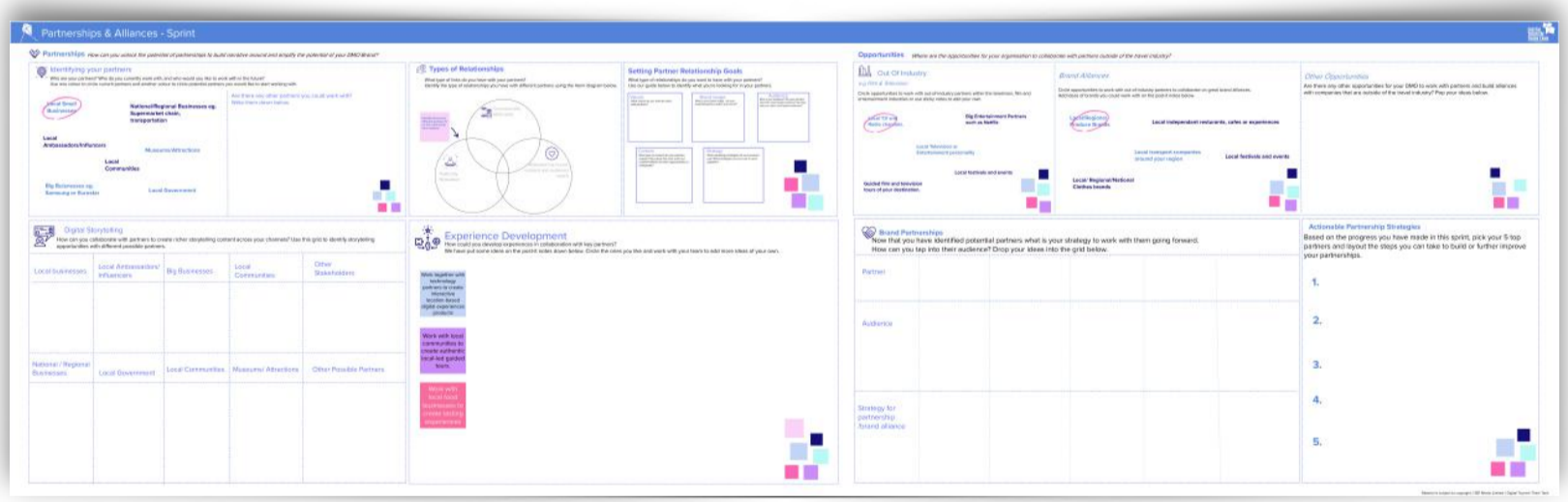
1. Partnership & Alliances - Sprint

The Sprint is the first chance you have to gather your team and start a brainstorming and ideation process to assess and implement the network of partners. To make the most of a Sprint session you should print the following template in a big format, for example A1 or A0 and hang it on the wall in order to allow contribution from everyone in the team.

The first section includes the identification of existing and potential partners; in the next section, it will be possible to identify the kind of relationship with these partners and if it is motivated by commercial, political or brand-related reasons. Next section enables to set the goal of the partnership, for example, if it is possible to promote the brand values, the content or a new aspect of the strategy of the DMO.

Focusing on content, it is important to consider if there is the need to promote the partnership through storytelling and how to involve the partners in this, as well as, deciding with the partner how to develop or enhance experiences.

The section on the right is useful to look into opportunities; first seeking for partners in and outside the industry. At the end of the sprint, you and your team will be able to come up with a list of 5 top partnerships to be enhanced or build and an initial idea on what initiative to undertake.



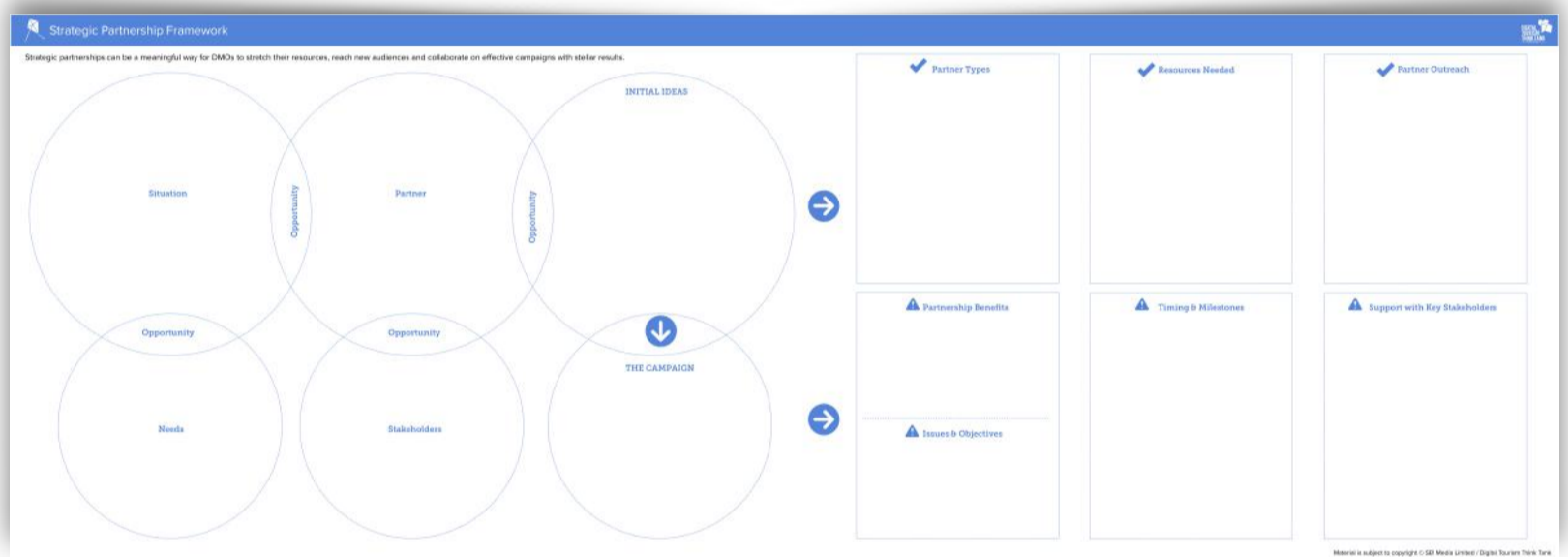
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[Mural template](#)

2. Strategic Partnership Framework

It is essential to understand what the needs of the DMO are, before trying to identify opportunities. The aim of each partnership is to improve your situation by investing in one great opportunity. Parallel to this, you need to analyse your stakeholders, looking for possible partners. Once selected potential partners, it is possible to start to ideate the concept of the partnership campaign.

The template enables to gather initial ideas and start to build up the key message to attract the target audience in the 'campaign' area. In the top 3 boxes, the focus is more generally on the overall strategy, while in the bottom ones the focus is on the marketing campaign. The template includes a list where it is possible to collect the resources needed and the features of your partner and how to benefit from this collaboration. It is also important to consider time and set some goals in order to realise if the idea is feasible or not and finally, point out issues and problems that may derive from the marketing campaign.



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[Mural template](#)

3. Creating Content Through Partnerships

This Template is the best way for you to start thinking about how to build the content strategy for your partnership campaign. In the first section you will be able to identify the common goals and challenges of your partnership. Identify what is needed to create content, the goals, the benefits and resources needed. Then think about possible challenges, timeframe and milestones and how to get support from stakeholders.

In the business model canvas it will be possible to identify how to actually develop the whole project around the partnership; not to forget the audience match, it is important to define your personas, with specific and defined characteristics. Finally, the focus in on the creation of content, according to the framework of Hero, Hub and Hygiene, to the people that need to be involved and the channels that are intended to be used.

Creating Content Through Partnerships

Identify the common goals and challenges of your partnership

1. Start with identifying what is needed to create content through a partnership, the goals, benefits and resources needed. Then think about possible challenges, timeframe and milestones and how to get support from stakeholders.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partnership Goals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partnership Benefits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resources Needed
<input type="checkbox"/> Possible challenges	<input type="checkbox"/> Timing & Milestones	<input type="checkbox"/> Support with Key Stakeholders

Identify partnership opportunities

2. Use the Business Model canvas to identify opportunities for a partnership. Identify partners, activities, resources, the value proposition, the customer segments and relationship with them, the channels for promotion, costs and revenues.

Key Partners	Key Activities	Value Proposition	Customer Relationship	Customer Segments
Key Resources		Channels		
Cost structure		Revenue streams		

Audience

3. Describe three personas of the audience you want to target with the content created through the partnership.

Persona 1

Name: _____
Age: _____
Country: _____
Interests: _____
Notes: _____

Persona 2

Name: _____
Age: _____
Country: _____
Interests: _____
Notes: _____

Persona 3

Name: _____
Age: _____
Country: _____
Interests: _____
Notes: _____

Subject

4. Describe the subject of your content. Is it a product? Experience? Event? Place? Theme?

Creating the content

5. Who is going to create the content? Is it going to be Hero, Hub or Hygiene content?

Who is the content creator? Write names and ideas.

Content creator

Producer / Photographer / Editor

Influencer / Ambassador

Which type of content do you envisage?

HERO Hero content is designed to tell a story, inspire and educate. It is often used to build brand awareness and establish thought leadership.	HUB Hub content is designed to provide a central point of contact for your audience. It is often used to provide a central point of contact for your audience.	HYGIENE Hygiene content is designed to provide a consistent and regular flow of content. It is often used to maintain a consistent and regular flow of content.
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Channel

6. Which form of content do you want to launch and through which channel's will you distribute it?

Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Image/s <input type="checkbox"/> Video <input type="checkbox"/> 360 image <input type="checkbox"/> Story	Instagram <input type="checkbox"/> Image/s <input type="checkbox"/> 60° Video <input type="checkbox"/> Story <input type="checkbox"/> IG TV	YouTube <input type="checkbox"/> Inspirational video <input type="checkbox"/> Vlog <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary <input type="checkbox"/> Playlist	Website <input type="checkbox"/> Blog post/Article <input type="checkbox"/> Webpage <input type="checkbox"/> Video <input type="checkbox"/> Album / Gallery	Snapchat <input type="checkbox"/> Story <input type="checkbox"/> Photos <input type="checkbox"/> Live video	Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> Tweet <input type="checkbox"/> Poll <input type="checkbox"/> Media
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Mural template

4. Managing Stakeholders Expectations

In order to provide an extra tool to assess the other players in the industry and see how to make the most of these relationships, the template package of this chapter includes also a Stakeholder Analysis. One of the most traditional yet useful tools to define who should be involved in your project and in what way. Learn how to manage your stakeholders' expectations, ranking them according to fixed parameters: influence and interest. In the first section, list your stakeholders, naming as many as possible, so that you can reduce the risk of forgetting someone. Then position your stakeholders in the grid according to the parameters of influence (high/low) or interest (high/low).

This template will provide you with 4 groups of stakeholders:

1. Stakeholders that have high decisional power (influence) but low availability that you need to keep satisfied, constantly trying to meet their needs;
2. Stakeholders that have both high influence and availability, who you can actively engage with and involve in the co-creation of a new product, experience, etc;
3. Stakeholders that have high availability but low influence, which means you have to keep them informed and updated about what your DMO is doing;
4. Stakeholders that have both low influence and interest, that you need to monitor in order to detect the right time to engage with them.

Do it with your team in order to collect many different perspectives and opinions.

Managing Stakeholder Expectations

Use this template to define who should be involved and in what way so there are as few hiccups as possible along the way.

1 Define your Stakeholders:
With your team, write down who the stakeholders are for your project.

They could be partners, members of other teams, clients, visitors, attractions, service providers, etc. Anyone who has a stake in the outcome of your project should be included here.

2 Categorise your Stakeholders:
Organise the stakeholders you defined in the grid on the right based on their availability and their decision-making power.

You can use this information to determine how to manage and communicate with each stakeholder.

Know who to engage at which part of your project to keep all stakeholders in sync.

Who are your stakeholders?

↑	Keep satisfied	Actively engage
↓	Monitor	Keep informed
	INTEREST / AVAILABILITY →	

For example, for a stakeholder with big decision making power but little availability it might be best to schedule in regular meetings for feedback. For other stakeholders, maybe a quick informal update will suffice.

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ONLINE LEARNING

The resource pack of the 12 Stages of Transformation Series related to this topic includes the access to the seventh module of the 12 Part DMO Transformation Online Course, [Partnership & Alliances](#), that gives you an overview of the topics covered in this report in the form of video lessons with additional extracts from the selected case studies and talks mentioning the topic of targeting and distribution. The online course is meant to guide you in a more interactive way into the topic and assess your knowledge.

Once completed, you'll get a certificate which shows you are equipped to start changing your organisation with the #DTTT's seal of approval.

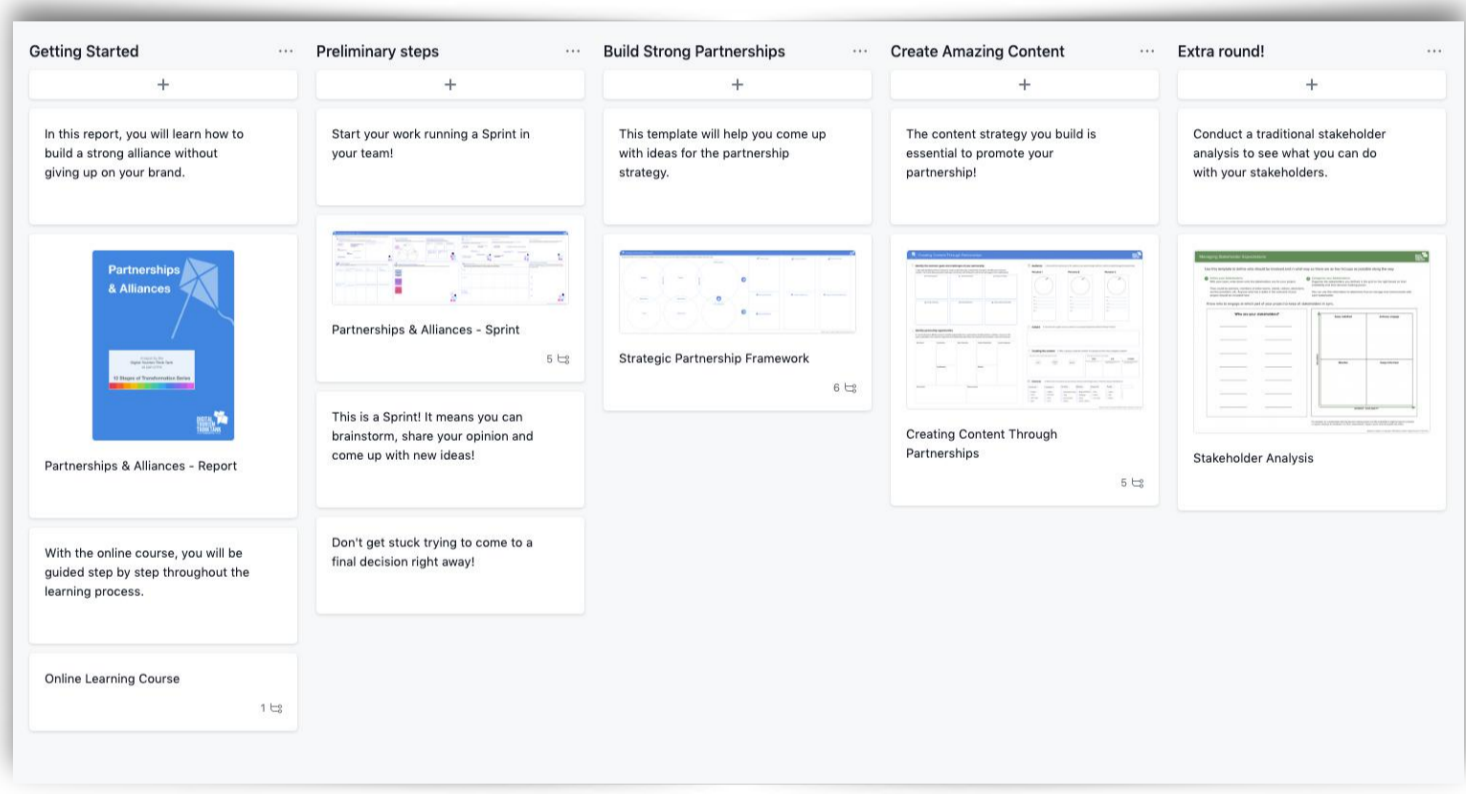
Click on the link below to join the course. If you are a #DTTT Member, ask the Launchpad Resource Manager of your DMO how to access the course, or contact the #DTTT Team through the chat on the Launchpad or by email at michela@thinkdigital.travel.

[Go to the online course!](#)

ASANA PROJECT TEMPLATE

Along with this report, templates and the online course about Content & Engagement, we created an Asana Project Template that you can import into your [Asana](#) workspace to start working on your content strategies and plan content and collaborations with content creators.

With this, you'll have a project with multiple tasks to plug-in and play, including the actions you need to take to review your existing content and make a plan for new content using storytelling, planning tools and evaluating possible partnerships with ambassadors and influencers.



[Go to the Asana Project](#)



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