

THE TREND REPORT 2018

Staying ahead of the curve has always been one of the keys to our successes at VISIT PHILADELPHIA. Here's a look at some industry trends we're watching and embracing in 2018:



Trends We're Watching

1. Unconventional and On-Demand Travel Experiences

Summary: Travelers want enriching experiences on vacation, and today, it's easier than ever to guide and book increasingly unconventional and on-demand tours and activities.

The Lowdown: Experiential travel has grown over the past decade. The latest development in experiential travel: The ability to book tours and activities with non-conventional tour guides. Companies such as Airbnb and Zeeno have democratized tour-giving, so that locals can give visitors a tour of their hometown. Zeeno also allows travelers to book on-demand tours. For example, Philly visitors can instantly book a food tour of Manayunk or the Italian Market—similar to booking Uber or Lyft.

2. Travel Brands' Expanded Offerings

Summary: More and more, we see hotels, airlines and other travel brands expanding beyond their normal business to assist travelers during all stages of their trips.

The Lowdown: Hotels, airlines, online travel agencies and short-term lodging companies are expanding into new segments. Airbnb, which started as a home-sharing platform, now offers locally guided experiences in various cities, and SAS Airlines invited some of its most loyal flyers to accompany its head chef on a five-day excursion to Japan. And hotel brands like Marriott International, Hyatt and AccorHotels are investing in experience platforms for guests. These expansions enable people to book more facets of their trip in one place—a welcome feature for busy, on-the-go travelers.

3. New Food Tourism Apps

Summary: Travelers crave authentic, local experiences on vacation—especially with food. New apps connect visitors with homegrown markets and locals in their homes.

The Lowdown: Instagram-worthy meals and reservations at highly acclaimed restaurants are still coveted experiences, but travelers also want to visit local markets and dine in local homes. Platforms such as MealSharing and Feastly enable them to do just that.

4. Communal Hotel Spaces

Summary: Hotel guests want to connect and engage with other travelers, and hoteliers are responding to this demand with activated communal spaces.

The Lowdown: Travelers are seeking accommodations with design-focused spaces for hanging out and mingling with other guests, and hotels are responding by improving large communal spaces instead of making rooms bigger. Philadelphia's Aloft Hotel, for example, delivers a sense of community with its Live at Aloft program—a weekly evening of live, intimate performances in the lobby.

5. Hotel Marketing Destinations

Summary: Big hotel brands are now marketing destinations, rather than just their own properties, with location-based lists and guides to inspire their guests.

The Lowdown: As experiential travel continues to grow, brands such as Hilton and Marriott have expanded and shifted budgets to market entire destinations instead of just their hotel properties. Providing inspiration, must-do lists and travel guides to potential visitors allows brands to expand their reach beyond their typical guests and create partnerships within the industry.

Trends We're Embracing

1. Google Travel

Summary: Google has been displaying more and more information in search results, so users never have to leave the Google ecosystem. Google has taken this one step further with Destinations, a layout for vacation or destination searches.

The Lowdown: When searching for destinations, consumers are presented with popular locations, flight options, hotel recommendations and suggested itineraries, never having to leave the Google travel ecosystem. We're looking toward the future of digital destination marketing as we join 14 of the first DMOs to collaborate on an initiative to help us influence the destination's presence on Google, where there are 3.8 million searches every minute.

2. Nostalgia Marketing

Summary: Nostalgia marketing works. The recent and distant past holds emotional appeal, and people want to feel connected to a brand or destination.

The Lowdown: In a high-tech society, consumers want their favorite brands to reach them through personal connections and engage them with fond memories. Our Homesick Philly initiative taps into feelings of homesickness to draw people back to reconnect with, rediscover and revisit Philadelphia.

3. Geofencing

Summary: Geofencing has become a popular trend among marketers and allows them to advertise to potential customers on mobile, desktop or tablet in a digitally defined geographic area.

The Lowdown: VISIT PHILADELPHIA is using geofencing technology to gather information on qualified audiences to invite them to come to Philadelphia, do more while visiting, come back and sleep over. Based on popular precise locations where travelers spend their time, we can use geolocation campaigns—specifically branded Snapchat geofilters and geotargeted Facebook posts—to deliver messages to visitors in specific areas or during special events.

4. The Evolution of Content Consumption

Summary: How content is being consumed is changing, and creating easily consumed, credible content across several platforms is the most effective way to gain an audience's attention.

The Lowdown: People are spending more time online and consuming more video, social and mobile-first content about Philly on more platforms more than ever. As a response to these changes, we redesigned visitphilly.com to emphasize things-to-do- and reasons-to-visit-focused content.



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