

Engagement Strategies for Travel Club



Introduction

Every travel club company has the same mission: to create loyalty while maximizing member value. But your most important asset isn't your product, or your branding, or even your team—it's your members. The most successful travel club companies succeed because they excel during each stage of

their member lifecycle: acquiring new members, growing their lifetime value, and converting them into brand advocates.

Engagement marketing is about creating meaningful interactions with your members, based on who they are and what they do, continuously over time. It's marketing that engages members towards a goal, wherever they are, and it's marketing that is backed by both creative vision and hard data. Finally, it's marketing that allows you to move quickly, shortening the time between idea and outcome, so that you can create more—and better targeted—programs. Engaging members yields the highest marketing ROI. A study by King Fish Media found that businesses spend 56% of their marketing budgets on new member acquisition and 33% on member retention. But businesses seem to grasp the need to invert this ratio—according to econsultancy, 82% of businesses agree that retention is cheaper than acquisition, and 49% said they achieve higher ROI from engagement marketing than from acquisition marketing. Bain & Company has found that it costs between six and seven times more to acquire a new member than retain an existing one, but that repeat members tend to spend more—as much as 67% more. But in today's interconnected world, marketing to members isn't just about their individual value—it's also about the value of their networks. A happy, loyal member is more likely to refer new members, improving your acquisition. According to Forbes, 80% of all purchases include some form of word-of-mouth recommendation during the purchase cycle. Better yet, potential buyers who were referred by members are 3-5 times more likely to convert to members.

Here are 6 Engagement Strategies to increase member usage of travel club:

1. VIDEO ASSETS

Video assets have been unanimously chosen as one of the rising stars in engagement marketing corridors, thanks to social integration and investments by Internet giants. It is gaining a vital place in the engagement marketing plans of all major companies to connect with consumers and engage with them.

Don't believe the hype? Here are some statistics to prove the point. According to Syndacast, **74 percent of all Internet traffic in 2017 will be video**. Not only that, studies show that using the word "Video" in the subject line of an email can increase open rates by 19 percent, click-through rates by 65 percent and reduce un-subscribers by 26 percent. According to Twitter, videos and photos get the most retweets.

Create video asset for each of the benefit of your travel club explaining how the benefit is going to help the members. The objectives of educating, entertaining, inspiring or increasing

brand awareness can all be achieved through videos. More and more people today educate themselves through video tutorials. Animoto's research says that **96 percent of consumers find videos helpful**

when they are trying to learn and understand a product. Moreover, 58 percent of them consider companies that produce videos to be more trustworthy.

2. E-MAIL MARKETING

Compared to average members, engaged and loyal members can help boost a company's revenue by 23%, according to a recent Gallup survey.

Here, you'll find some great ways to increase member engagement through your email marketing. Engaging your travel club members through emails not only helps in making them your loyal members but it also helps in retaining them.

Send welcome emails. What's the first thing you do when a guest shows up at your house? You welcome them into your home, of course. The same should go for your email strategy. As soon as someone signs up for your travel club membership, send them welcome emails.

This is a great way to begin a new relationship, and an added benefit is that recipients are more likely to engage with your call to actions (CTAs). By giving your members useful information in the emails, they're inclined to learn more and click through to your website. It's a win-win.

Welcome emails set the stage for your member relationship. By being a good host, you're establishing the foundation for a lasting relationship. Make it known that you want to hear from your members. Send them a series of emails educating them about the benefits of travel club. This would also help in onboarding of members.

How do you drive engagement in your email-marketing campaigns? These five tips are a great way to start:

- **Convey your value in your subject lines** — If members are trashing your emails before opening them, it means that they're looking at the subject line (combined with the sender address) and determining that the email content is not relevant to their needs. So, be sure your subject line conveys the value of the content in your email message.
- **Personalize your content and offers** — If your open rates start out high with new members and fall precipitously, your email content and offers are not meeting their expectations. Personalization is one of the most important ways to keep your members opening and engaging with your emails. In addition to using the member's name, segmenting your email list based on

such factors as demographics and purchase history can help maximize the relevance of your email content and offers for each member.

- **Create calls to action that convert** — The calls to action in your emails are the entrance to your engagement funnel. Can your members easily spot them? Does the button copy motivate a click?
- **Optimize for mobile** — If you're not using responsive design to optimize your emails for mobile, then your member engagement metrics are likely suffering.
- **Automate your emails** — Marketing automation combines strategy and software to help you create more relevant and personalized email campaigns. A/B testing, personalization, and dynamic content are just a few examples of automation features that can be used to help boost email engagement.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social networking is currently the most popular online activity among consumers worldwide. According to recent statistics, it accounts for almost one in every five minutes spent online, and reaches 82% of the entire world's online population, which represents an audience of nearly 1.2 billion internet users. Not surprisingly, the industry has followed the consumer and almost 94% of all businesses with a marketing department have established their presence and continuously pursue engaging their member base on at least one of the "Big Three" social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter and Google+.

Each of the social media channels offer the following benefits:

- **Interaction:** Your content right on the homepage allows users to interact with it like they do with any other piece of social content.
- **Reach:** Expand your reach to new potential members who can interact with your content by commenting, liking, favoriting, retweeting, etc.
- **Followers:** Companies also report a notable increase in followers through these social media postings, since brand visibility increases significantly.

Here are the top tips for engaging your members on Social Media:

- **Show your brand's personality** so the postings feel genuine and on-brand.
- **Be succinct.** You only have a few seconds to catch their eye—make it good!

- **Be informal** and talk like your audience does naturally on social media.
- Always include a **call to action (CTA)**. Make it clear what you want them to do.
- Include an **image for visual impact** to boost click-through rates. On Twitter, for example, including an image can boost engagement by 94%!

Pay attention to posting times. Social media is only effective if your posting times are aligned with your audience's platform activity.

Use your platform-specific analytics and insight tools to monitor when your audience is most active and tailor your posting schedule to those times. If new content is published when your followers are on the platform, they're more likely to engage, comment, like, or share than when they see it hours, or days, after its original publish date. Integrate these specific times into your social media editorial calendar and social media marketing tool to develop posting consistency.

4. GIVEAWAYS, COMPETITIONS AND QUIZZES

We all like the idea of getting something for nothing, whether it's money-saving coupons, a freebie, or winning a prize in a competition.

But you don't even have to give anything away to get your audience engaging with your brand. People love to 'pit their wits' against others and frequently share their results on social media. Design some travel related puzzles and quizzes which your members can share on their social media accounts. Also, hold some giveaways where you provide some travel vouchers or any travel related prizes to the winners.

There are numerous ways to run online contests. However, when you focus on content, you create a fun, engaging experience for your users. And better yet, you have the opportunity to build your brand, as well as long-term relationships with your audience and members.

➤ **Contests Are a Great Tool for Building Your Fan Base**

Whether you are starting with 100 or 100,000 likes on your Facebook Page, contests offer a proven way to increase that number. Of course, this is not the only metric to think about, but it is one measure of the power of a promotion. A basic enter-to-win sweepstakes with a lower barrier to entry often provides the best option for the travel club companies just starting out with social media contests or without a large base of fans in place. Is the pricing for the provided membership feasible and aligned with other competitors?

➤ **Contests Enable You to Engage Your Audience**

In addition to increasing the sheer number of people who interact with your brand, a contest provides a means to deepen the connection as well. A user-generated content (UGC) promotion

such as a photo or video contest is a great way to do just that. UGC contests tap in to the human drive to compete, and they provide an opportunity for everyone to experience their 15 minutes of fame. Most importantly, when participants upload their personal content (e.g., a photo or story) to your promotion, they are naturally invested in your brand.

If your contest includes a voting component, participants will be inclined to share through their social graph, asking friends and family to support their entry. The following rules of thumb applies in voting competitions: You are likely to see ten voters for every entry (often many more) as well as ten clicks for every shared link. These numbers represent a significant multiplier of traffic to your contest site or application as a result of consumers marketing to other consumers.

5. HOST WEBINARS

With countless travel clubs competing for member attention and engagement in a single space, it has become more important than ever to possess the right tools for not only member acquisition but member engagement and retention.

What's the one tool that takes care of all three things simultaneously? **Webinars.**

Over 60% of B2C marketers are using webinars as part of their engagement marketing strategy.

Webinars are the only content medium that utilize audio, video, and interaction at the same time.

Why are webinars effective?

They are interactive as well as educational: Webinars are an immersive content marketing medium. Not only can they keep your members engaged for the duration of the time, but they often include an interactive Q & A session — which many attendees find useful.

They happen in real time: This gives your members a great sense of inclusion and engagement and gives them a medium to understand the many benefits of your travel club. However, many webinars are recorded and available for later viewing which can then serve as video assets.

Great alternative to a physical event: Don't have the budget to host a live event for your members? Not to worry, just host a webinar and get your prospects and members together in one place.

Webinars can be used to educate your prospective members on a topic that's relevant to them (member acquisition) and as a means of demonstrating your product in front of them (member engagement and retention).

6. CONDUCT SURVEYS AND POLLS

Run frequent surveys to give opportunities to initiate engagement while learning from and about your listening community. Online surveys are a quick and efficient way of discovering

What your member really think, and with this data you can ensure you're providing the best experience possible. Surveys are an essential quality assurance, feedback and evaluation tool for every aspect of your travel club offering.

Once you have an interested community engaging with you, make sure you keep the lines of communication going, learn and adjust your strategy to ensure your engagement marketing will delivery bottom-line results to your travel club business by increasing your member base and repeat sales from your engaged members.

Here are 3 benefits of survey research:

- **Cost:** Surveys are relatively inexpensive. Online surveys and mobile surveys, in particular, have a very small cost per respondent. Even if incentives are given to respondents, the cost per response is often far less.
- **Flexible:** Surveys can be administered in many modes, including: online surveys, email surveys, social media surveys, paper surveys, mobile surveys, telephone surveys, and face-to-face interview surveys.
- **Dependable:** The anonymity of surveys allows respondents to answer with more candid and valid answers. To get the most accurate data, you need respondents to be as open and honest as possible with their answers. Surveys conducted anonymously provide an avenue for more honest and unambiguous responses than other types of research methodologies.