



Enhance Your Business With the Newest Technology

THIS COLUMN IN THE February 2012 issue kicked off the New Year with a few simple, cost-effective, technology-based travel marketing ideas. It was determined a good website is essential if you're going to keep up with today's tech-savvy traveler. Realizing that web search engines like fresh, new content it was determined regular additions to your site are indispensable. And thoughts were shared on how to have your website visitors interact through video views and e-newsletter sign-ups.

There certainly was a ton of good business done "back in the day" with catalogs, flyers and brochures. Continue those tried-and-proven methods if they are working for you. However, keep the toolbox unlocked and look at

the newer technology. Some will work handsomely with what you are already doing. Here are a few to consider:

1 Marry your marketing materials and QR codes. Here's a great way to combine the new with the tried and true. QR codes are those little squares with all the squiggly black designs. It's barcode technology and can easily be added to any marketing piece. Most printers, graphic designers and video producers can handle the task. Potential clients with a smartphone can scan the code and link to your web page with offer details, an informative video or a testimonial. That web page can provide considerably more information than a single-sheet flyer. Of course, the video has that wonderful ability to demonstrate.

2 Mobile marketing is coming to tour & travel. There's more to mobile marketing than presenting a QR Code and driving customer/prospect traffic to an online spot of your choice. The United States is moving towards having as many mobile phone subscriptions as there is population. In most major cities there are more households without landlines than there are with the traditional telephone service. The opportunities in the travel business are endless. Consider Bluetooth proximity marketing. Suppliers at a tradeshow/marketplace blast a message to all Bluetooth-enabled phones promoting a special at their booth or seminar. At that same marketplace a tour operator looking to partner with another operator may send out that very message.

3 Leverage suppliers wisely. One of the biggest assets that tour operators can add to their toolbox is a supplier that can help market a tour to their destination. The majority of CVBs and tourism offices will have footage that they can edit to fit just about any possible visit to their area. That's exactly what you'll need on the QR Code-to-website video link. Of course, one of the best assets a supplier can have in the marketing toolbox is just such a video. Photographs will always have a place, but video is becoming increasingly important.

You can sense my excitement for the new technology and how it will impact the tour & travel segment. I'm all about partnerships and programs that blend the proven with something new that will enhance results. New technology offers just such an opportunity.

On the other hand, some of the new technology-based opportunities simply do not work for me and I wonder about their return on investment. If you're not a writer, why waste your time maintaining a blog? What good is Twitter if you're limited to a set number of characters? Who hasn't lost interest in Facebook and the absolute drivel that's mixed with a few posts of substance?

The simplest way of looking at the new marketing technologies is remembering who brought you to the dance, but realizing a look around the dance hall really doesn't hurt.

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