

# Be



# there



# every



# step.



Find **the right channels** for every booking stage

# Introduction

Google recently defined its **4 stages of travel**, which encompass everything from the initial spark in which someone decides they might want to take a trip, all the way through the process of a guest sharing their vacation photos and experiences online with friends and family. In this guide, we will pair the steps in the traditional sales and marketing funnel with Google's travel stages to help your hotel better define and select the appropriate advertising channels for each step of the travel journey.

## UPPER FUNNEL

### Dreaming Stage

**Where they are:** These "I-want-to-get-away" moments are when people are exploring destination options and ideas with no firm plans in place. They are looking for inspiration.

**Where you should be:**

YouTube TrueView, Gmail ads, Google Adwords Display Network, Facebook video view ads, Third-party display ads.

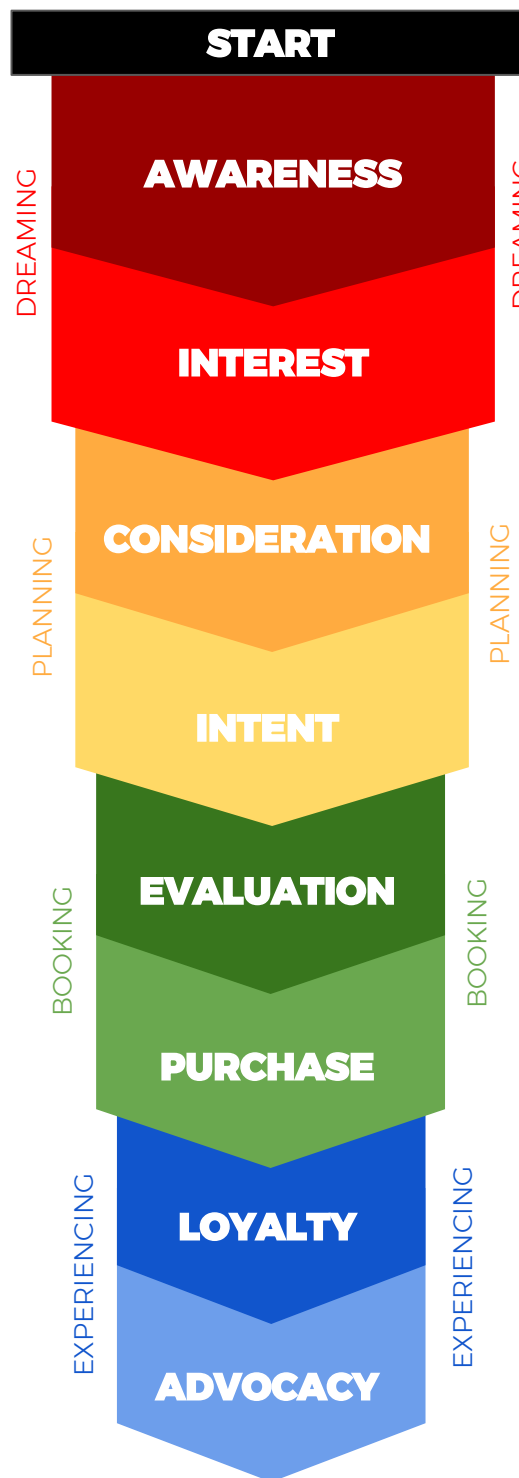
## MID-FUNNEL

### Planning Stage

**Where they are:** Potential visitors have chosen a destination during these "time-to-plan-it" moments. They're looking for the right dates, the right flight, the right place to stay, and all the things they'll do while they're there.

**Where you should be:**

YouTube TrueView, Gmail ads, Google Adwords Display Network, Non-brand PPC ads, Facebook like acquisition & lead ads, TripAdvisor, Google Hotels, meta search & online travel agents.



## BOTTOM FUNNEL

### Booking Stage

**Where they are:** During these "Let's-book-it" moments, the research is done and people are ready to purchase their plane tickets and reserve their hotel rooms.

**Where you should be:**

Branded pay-per-click ads, Facebook website click ads & dynamic ads for travel, TripAdvisor, Google Hotel Ads, meta search & online travel agents.

## POST-FUNNEL

### Experiencing Stage

**Where they are:** Once the trip is under way, Google calls these "Can't-wait-to-explore" moments. Where the funnel traditionally ends or turns to repeat business, hotels who continue to advertise can focus on upselling guests and turning current customers into walking social advertisements.

**Where you should be:** E-mail, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, your hotel's app, on-site advertising



# Things to remember...

Before we dive right into exploring the best channels for every step of the travel journey, here are three quick tips to consider that will help you get the most from your hotel marketing efforts:



## 1. There's no one right way.

Though the goal of this guide is to define the best tools to use for advertising your hotel at each step in the travel journey, there is no definitively right set of channels to use in a certain situation.

Some channels tend to fall into more than one portion of the funnel and can be used in several phases. Others that have worked for our clients may not work for you at all — after all, every property and destination is different.

**So be sure to test new things regularly to find the mix of advertising outlets that works best for you.** Make sure you allocate your advertising budget based on your own goals and the potential return each channel offers.

## 2. It's important to know your hotel's role.

In addition to knowing the right channels to use, it is also important to understand the place of hotels in the ecosystem of online advertising. **In general, it is not in an individual property's interest to focus on generating a demand for a destination.**

There are exceptions to this — such as Disney or Atlantis — but for the vast majority of leisure hotels, your time, energy, and advertising dollars are better spent persuading visitors with a predetermined intent to travel to your destination to stay at your hotel.



## 3. It's not just about where.

When allocating your advertising budget, you need to carefully consider not only the channel in question, but also the ad format, the messaging, the targeting, and the landing page experience during each step of this process.

Even if you catch potential customers in the right place at the right time, it won't matter if your ads aren't enticing or your website and booking engine are hard to use.



# The Dreaming Stage

Travelers dreaming of a leisure vacation are easily distracted by the new and shiny. They simply have a defined travel intent but have not gotten down to the nuts and bolts of planning their vacation.

A leisure traveler could be weeks or even months away from actually booking a hotel, but the spark is there. He or she has caught the travel bug and is itching to quench his or her adventure thirst.

This is the perfect opportunity for your hotel or resort to plant a seed in that consumer's head about your property. There are several fantastic options when it comes to targeting travel-ready consumers early in the travel planning process.



## **CHALLENGES**

### **1. Are you visible?**

Getting noticed among a sea of other properties at this stage in the process can be a challenge. That's why choosing a variety of channels and targeting specific user segments is important to set yourself apart from others.

### **2. Are you setting your expectations properly?**

The key to success with this strategy is to set realistic goals and expectations with campaigns.

Direct return on ad spend is rarely a goal or outcome of these branding campaigns; rather, your hotel should focus on metrics like impressions, CPM, ad recall lift rate, etc. (Metrics will vary per advertising platform.)

## **GOALS**

### **1. Inspire travel**

At the inspiration stage of the funnel, your ads should focus on selling the unique experience of your hotel or your destination to spark a desire to travel.

### **2. Generate awareness**

While this is often best tackled by a local travel portal or destination marketing organization, awareness marketing can be very successful for properties with a unique offering and a budget to accommodate demand generation.



# Channels to consider

Here are the top advertising channels for hotels to generate interest, intent, and consideration:

## YouTube TrueView

TrueView ads are an ideal option for hotels seeking demand generation because this opt-in viewing platform only charges advertisers when consumers choose to actually watch the video advertisement. There is no time restriction with how long your video ad can run, so advertisers have the flexibility and creative control to convey their message from a variety of approaches.

Viewers have the option to watch the advertisement or to skip the ad entirely, ensuring your video is only watched by an interested audience. The platform offers two placement options:

### In-stream ads

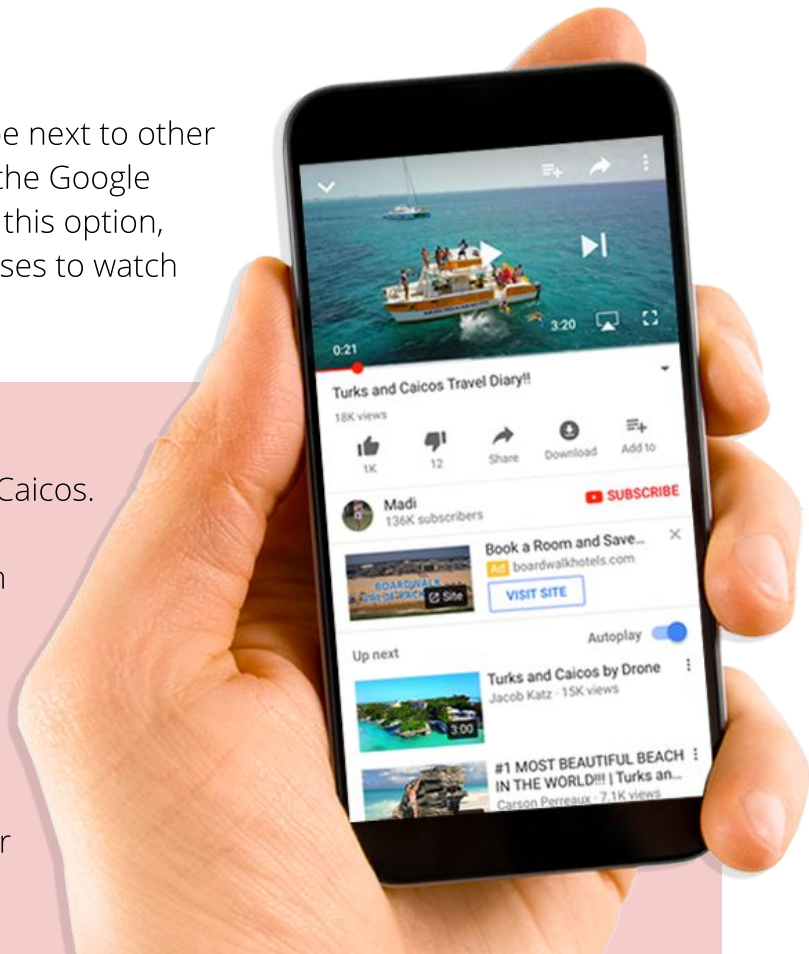
“In-stream” ads play before or during a YouTube clip. Viewers are only subjected to 5 seconds of your advertisement, at which time they have the option to continue watching or to “skip” the ad. Advertisers are only charged when a viewer watches at least 30 seconds of the video ad or when a viewer clicks on a card or other element of the ad.

### Video discovery ads

“Video discovery” ads appear throughout YouTube next to other YouTube videos, in search pages, or throughout the Google Display Network on relevant partner websites. In this option, advertisers are only charged when a viewer chooses to watch the video by clicking on the ad.

#### CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE

You are a remote, adult-only resort in Turks & Caicos. Create a one-minute destination and property overview video highlighting the secluded beach location, area, and on-property things to do. Target a “lookalike” audience based on your current e-mail subscriber list, adults ages 25 to 45, income-based targeting \$100,000+. Include a clear call-to-action to explore your resort, directing users to the homepage of your website at the end of the video.

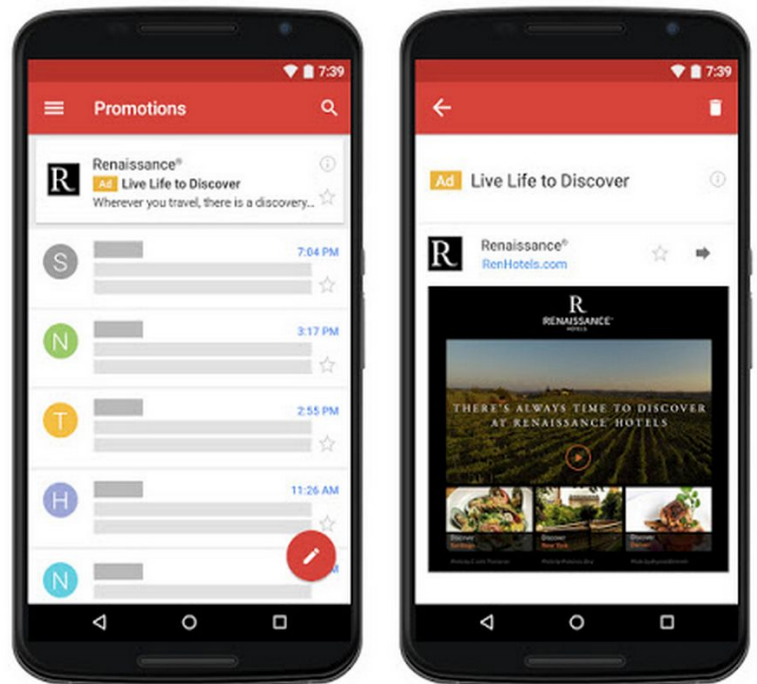


# Gmail Ads

A format Gmail users are probably already familiar with, Gmail ads appear at the top of users' inboxes.

These ads are designated with a "promotion" label but otherwise appear as a regular email. The platform allows marketers to choose from several ad formats, which are easy to create and include the ability to upload custom videos and images.

Given that a majority of e-mail is read on mobile devices, the ads are optimized to perform well for desktop and mobile users.



Targeting for these ads works similarly to the Google Display Network, where advertisers can use keywords, affinity audiences, in-market audiences, topics, and demographics.

Advertisers can also use the "customer match" feature to find potential customers similar to an existing database. Finally, advertisers can direct their efforts toward consumers that have emails coming from a specific website, called "domain targeting".

## CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE

You are a family-friendly resort property in Orlando.

Use the "Catalog" email template in Gmail Ads and include a property overview video and content boxes with information on area destinations, area things to do, family-friendly property amenities, etc. In addition to a compelling offer, also make sure you have a clear call-to-action to visit the website.

Use domain targeting to reach individuals who receive e-mails from Disney, Universal, and other major destination draws. Add geographic targeting focused on key markets and also use interest-based targeting focused on travel.



# Google AdWords Display Network

Simply put, the Google Display Network is a very flexible and manageable place for advertisers to manage and test demand generation campaigns.

It allows marketers to reach consumers across the web with a variety of flexible text, image and video ad formats.

AdWords makes it easy to choose between a CPC or CPM based bidding model and has extensive targeting options including demographic, behavior, and placement based options.

Advertisers can also use the display network to retarget website visitors.

## CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE

You run a boutique hotel in the heart of wine country, California.

Create a display ad with a high-quality static image of an attractive young couple enjoying a glass of wine overlooking the vineyard with text overlay “Sip. Savor. See.” at the top and “Come For The Wine, Stay For The Experience. See Why Guests Prefer {property name}” as your call-to-action.

Target women ages 30 to 45 with income \$75,000+ and interests in food & wine, travel, etc. — essentially building a guest persona and applying that to display targeting.



## CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE

You are a high-end, scenic hotel on Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Use the Sojern traveler platform to identify high-income couples (double income, no kids aka DINKs) within key travel markets.

Create an ad featuring a couple enjoying a relaxing evening walk along the pristine coastline with the resort in the background.

Direct shoppers to your homepage.

## 3rd-Party Display Networks

This last category encompasses several different platforms so for the sake of brevity, we will mention just a few of our favorites.

- **Sojern:** [www.sojern.com](http://www.sojern.com)
- **AdRoll:** [www.adroll.com](http://www.adroll.com)
- **Quantcast:** [www.quantcast.com](http://www.quantcast.com)

These networks are similar to the Google Display Network (GDN), in that they allow you to reach prospective travelers in a passive way while they are going about their day. The ads will show up on other relevant websites and can be carefully targeted to reach high-quality prospects.

Unlike the GDN, however, some third-party providers have even more sophisticated targeting parameters and algorithms that can help you reach an even more specific audience.

Options include deep demographic targeting as well as sophisticated “lookalike audience” recognition. Above are a few of our favorite platforms to work with in this capacity.



# Facebook Video View Ads

Facebook is a fantastic platform for the travel space. This highly visual space lends itself nicely to selling experiences, which is exactly what travel marketers do — sell experiences.

The major perk of advertising on Facebook versus other platforms lies not in the ads themselves but in the diverse array of targeting options provided that allows marketers to home in on a specific audience with laser focus.

Facebook does have specific requirements and best practices for the video format and ad text length. Videos used for promotions can either be videos uploaded directly to the page at any point or live videos that have been created from the page.

The key to success with Facebook video view ads is to think mobile-first — over 90% of Facebook's traffic occurs via a mobile device from the platform's native app. Additionally, utilizing and layering Facebook's diverse targeting options is a no-brainer when it comes to reaching the right audience.

Options include demographic, interest-based, and geographic targeting parameters on top of even more sophisticated remarketing opportunities unleashed by using the Facebook pixel. The opportunities are limitless — so where do you even begin?

Start small. Identify key hotel personas based on existing guest data and target low-hanging fruit via strategic remarketing campaigns.

## CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE

You are a family-friendly beach resort in Virginia Beach. You create a 45-second destination and property overview video showcasing amenities, area things to do, families enjoying the beach with a CTA to “start planning your adventure”.

Target a lookalike audience based on your current page fan base and women and parents with kids between the ages 0 to 12 years old that are located in key geographic markets.

Direct users to the homepage of your website.





## INTEREST, INTENT, & CONSIDERATION

# The Planning Stage

Travelers in the interest and consideration phase of planning a leisure vacation already have your destination in mind — but that's about as far as they've gotten.

They simply have a well-defined travel intent and are in the weeds of researching lodging options, planning travel activities, reading online reviews, and more.

At this portion of the travel shopping funnel, your hotel or resort should focus on remaining present and providing shoppers with everything they could possibly need to make the right decision — which is to stay at your hotel, obviously. Advertising at this point in the funnel should persuade travel shoppers to strongly consider your property for their travel adventure.



## CHALLENGES

### Is this the right audience?

Make sure your advertising efforts are more focused in this phase by targeting the people who are most likely to consider your hotel.

Lookalike audiences — people who are likely to be interested in your business because they're similar to your best existing customers — are one way to do this. Using retargeting to advertise to people who have previously engaged with an ad in the previous phase can also greatly impact your bottom line here.

### Are you generating leads?

Make sure your KPIs during this phase move from impressions to more concrete lead metrics including email acquisitions, page likes, website traffic stats for lower level pages (indicates more defined interest in your property) and booking engine traffic stats (indicates price shopping).

## GOALS

### Stay in consideration

At the awareness and consideration stage of the funnel, your ads should focus on selling the unique experience of your individual hotel to nurture your property into the final consideration set.

### Collect e-mails

Make sure the wording of ads created during this phase is more direct and features a stronger call to action in order to generate leads by collecting e-mail addresses.



# Where to advertise

Here are the top advertising channels for hotels to generate interest, intent, and consideration:

## YouTube TrueView

As discussed earlier (see pg. 5), YouTube TrueView ads are an ideal option for hotels seeking demand generation because this opt-in viewing platform only charges advertisers when consumers choose to actually watch the video advertisement.

The key difference in using this channel during the planning stage is to focus on audiences that already have some level of awareness or interest in your property. For example, targeting visitors who did not complete a booking via the AdWords remarketing tag (or lists built via Analytics).

## Gmail Ads

Another channel that can be effective in more than one stage of the journey (see pg. 6), these e-mail ads are easy to create and customize.

When adapting this type of ad for further down the funnel, you may want to target a “lookalike” audience based on your previous season’s guest history.

You will also want to change where you direct your ads from your homepage to your amenities page in order to focus more on highlighting specific details for those visitors comparing your amenities to other comparable properties.

## Google Adwords Display Network

As mentioned previously (see pg. 7), the Google Display Network can be a great tool for demand generation campaigns, thanks to its versatility both in ad formats and targeting options.

The key to success at this stage with display ads is to use retargeting methods to find visitors who have shown an awareness of your property. By altering your messaging to focus on a specific package and directing users to a page on your website with the details of that package, you can help turn awareness into interest.

### CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE

You are the same boutique hotel in California wine country from page 7.

Create a display ad with a high-quality static image of attractive young woman drinking a glass of wine and laughing with text overlay “This 2014 Cab Franc Won’t Drink Itself” at the top and “Think You Can Help? Explore Our Unique Packages For Winos.” as the call-to-action.

Target women who have visited any page of your website without completing a booking. Direct users to a page dedicated to local wine tours and packages.

# Meta Search & Online Travel Agents

Studies suggest that as many as 95% of travelers will look at reviews prior to booking a hotel stay. Not only are metasearch websites primary places for travelers during the consideration phase, but they also rank incredibly well for broad search queries with a high amount of search volume from travelers researching various market options.

We typically advocate reducing reliance on OTAs, as adding your hotel inventory to third party sites can be a slippery slope and can put a huge dent into your profits. These sites can, however, be a viable source of new business if managed properly.

The key to using these sites to get valuable eyeballs on your property is to remember that you want to offer the same pricing across all channels, and ideally have a slightly lower rate on your own website or offer perks to incentivize direct bookings.

Metasearch and OTA sites offer a more limited set of targeting options than other channels, but offer a trade-off in terms of ease of use. Many platforms include algorithms that will auto-optimize campaigns, encouraging a “set it and forget it” approach.



## Google Hotel Ads

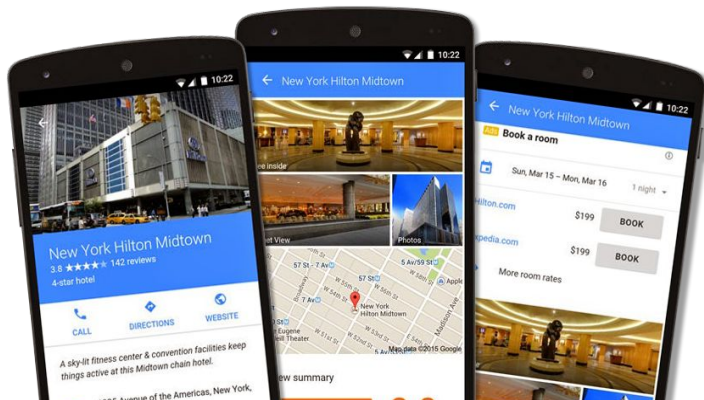
Though it has been widely debated whether Google is going to become an OTA, their focus on the travel space is undeniable. Hotel Ads, Google’s primary travel product, can be a great way to get in front of searchers during their travel research.

The platform functions as a hybrid between traditional PPC and metasearch/OTA placements. These ads are integrated into the local search packs and Google Maps listings and appear as a list of prices where participants can bid for placement. Though the ad only appears next to your hotel brand’s listing, advertisers have little to no control over where your local listing actually appears.

**Note: A hotel must work with a verified Google partner to participate in this program.**

Google is also stingy with their data, so keyword level information does not exist for these campaigns. Your local search listing could appear for any combination of brand or non-brand search queries.

It is important to note that OTAs are very present in this space and are likely already bidding for placement on your brand’s inventory.



# Non-brand pay-per-click

Non-brand Google AdWords campaigns are a great way to reach consumers during the research and consideration phase. “Non-brand” search campaigns refer to running AdWords campaigns on keywords that are not directly related to your hotel’s brand.

When considering whether a non-brand search campaign is right for your hotel, start by first evaluating any specific attributes that your property offers. Is your property near a local attraction, convention center, etc.? Does your property offer unique room types that researchers search for - like “condos”? Does your property offer a unique amenity, like an on-property spa or waterpark?

Take these specific attributes and use that to guide your keyword research. These “long-tail” keywords occupy a sweet spot between the insanely expensive “travel inspiration” phase, where a searcher is completing more generic queries like “hotels in san diego”, to a more defined travel intent, where a searcher is completing more specific searches that would better match your property, like “2 bedroom hotel suite in downtown san diego”.

From there, carefully craft your messaging and landing pages to not only impress and persuade searchers, but to also closely match your campaign data, which will ultimately increase your CTR, lower your CPC, and provide a better on-page experience for searchers.

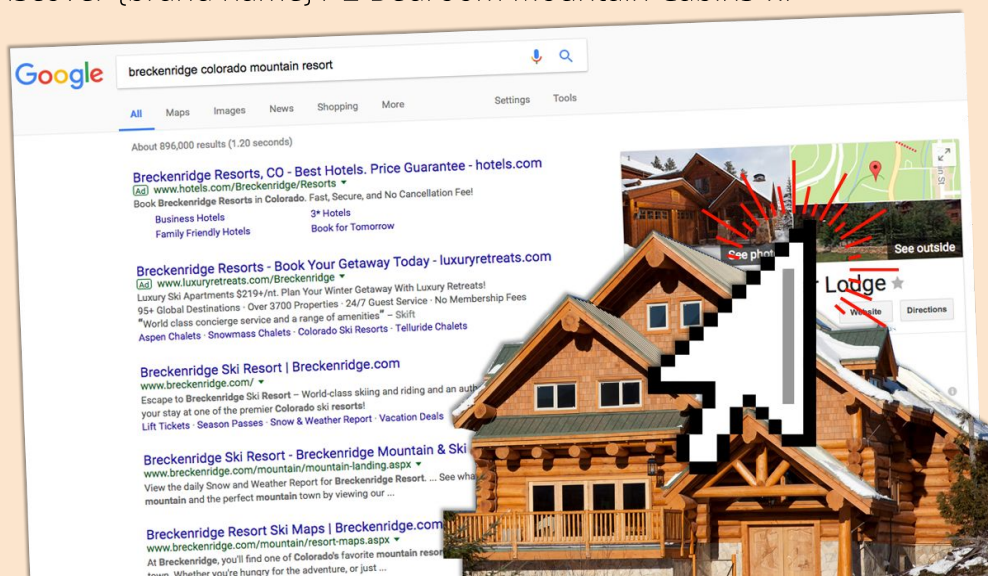
The key to success with running non-brand search campaigns is to always be testing!

## CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE

You are a luxury mountain resort in Breckenridge, CO that offers hotel rooms and mountain cabins.

You create a “# room cabin + breckenridge” campaign with an ad that reads “Your Breckenridge Cabin Awaits - Discover {brand name} / 2 Bedroom Mountain Cabins w/ Fireplace & Stunning Views. Explore Our Packages!”

The landing page should drive clicks to either the two bedroom cabins page or the specials and package page — this is a great opportunity to run an A/B test and see which page produces the most revenue.



# Facebook advertising

As the largest social platform in the world, Facebook boasts a user base of over one billion active users. No matter who they are, your guests and potential guests are on Facebook liking, sharing, and interacting with content for hours each day and you need to be there. The platform offers a generous array of ad types, including these we recommend for use in the planning phase:

## Like Acquisition Ads

The first step in nurturing guests is to invite them to “like” your page. Then, not only can you reach them organically in their newsfeed and share content with them, you can also target fans specifically in your advertising efforts to reach a warm audience that is already familiar with your brand.

## Lead Generation Ads

A more recent addition to Facebook’s expansive selection of ad offerings, lead ads have introduced a frictionless way to collect guest data. From a hotel perspective, lead ads can be a fantastic way to reach users considering a vacation and add those warm bodies to your property’s email list, thus allowing you to further nurture them through the funnel.

Targeting options for lead ads includes a robust array of demographic, interest-based, and geographic targeting parameters, in addition to retargeting tools available via the proprietary Facebook Pixel.

Advertisers will need to build out a “lead form” in advance and select what data should be collected. This information will then auto-populate via the user’s Facebook account (if available), eliminating the process of filling out information manually.

### CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE

You are a family friendly resort in Hilton Head Island. Use high-quality images of families enjoying your amenities paired with ad copy like, “Happy Kids - Happy Parents! Experience Hilton Head’s Premier Family Resort. ‘Like’ Our Page For Exclusive Deals & Discounts.”

Target income +\$75,000 parents with children between ages 2 to 12, a defined interest in Hilton Head & competitive destinations that live in key markets. Or, use an email list to target your email leads to further reinforce your marketing efforts.



## EVALUATION, DECISION, & PURCHASE

# The Booking Stage

Congratulations! Through a combination of sound marketing strategy, advertising, and likely a little luck, your hotel has remained in the consideration set of the consumer. Travelers who've reached this stage have done the research and are ready to book at your hotel. The important question is how and where will they make a reservation?

So now you must ask yourself: Is it easy to book with us? Are our rates consistent across all distribution channels? Does our website effectively solicit and capture email addresses? Is our hotel website easy to find, navigate, and use?

There are many questions to consider at this point, but most of these are beyond the scope of advertising, so we're hoping you've already worked with a solid travel marketing agency like Fuel to help you develop a user-friendly website with a straightforward booking experience.

## CHALLENGES

### Are you converting your leads?

Advertising during the decision and purchase phase has one job and one job only — to convert shoppers into bookers.

Ads will target your most highly qualified leads through brand-related campaigns and strategic retargeting techniques. Furthermore, ads will be focused on getting travel shoppers to move forward with the booking process.

## GOALS

### Get bookings!

At the decision and purchase stage of the funnel, your ads should focus on convincing the travel shopper that your hotel best meets all of their needs and to book their stay directly on your hotel website.

Remember that in this part of the travel journey it's time to close the deal, so be sure to include direct and strong call-to-action messaging such as "Book Now!" in all ads created for this stage.



# Channels to consider

Here are the top advertising channels for hotels to generate interest, intent and consideration:

## Branded pay-per-click

A traveler has done his or her research and has fallen in love with your property. You want to be there when he or she searches for you, right?

Despite much industry debate, the value of bidding on your own brand has been proven time and time again. Not only does it reinforce your brand and capture prime search engine real estate, it also helps combat other competition that is actively bidding on your brand. Yes, other people can, and will, bid on your brand.

Online travel agent and metasearch sites have gotten incredibly competitive in this space. They caught on to the fact that branded PPC clicks not only typically have a much lower cost per click, but also a much higher conversion rate and return based on the pure intent of the search.

Simply put, if you are not bidding on your brand, you are handing the OTAs commission dollars.

### CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE

You are a family-friendly resort in Gatlinburg.

Bid on brand terms and use phrases like “official site” or highlight a strong package deal in your ad headline.

Reinforce how guests can get the best rate by booking on your official website and be sure to use ad extensions to take up as much room as possible on the results page.

## Metasearch sites, OTAs & Google Hotel Ads

As mentioned previously (see pg. 11), using metasearch sites, online travel agents, and Google Hotel Ads can greatly reduce your profits if you rely on them too heavily. You want travelers to book direct and you should give travelers every opportunity to book on your website by offering the best rates and incentives there.

However, there are some people who are going to be lured in by a meta search site that is bidding for placement on your brand, or some people are loyal to a particular OTA brand, like Expedia. You still want to be there for travelers however and wherever they are looking to book.

That’s why we always recommend having a presence on these third-party booking sites. Of course, we also advocate that you educate travel shoppers on the value of booking direct and work diligently to convert OTA bookers into in-house bookers for their next visit.

But the bottom line is, if shoppers in the booking phase are looking to stay at your hotel and they aren’t able to find you via their favorite website, you’re going to have a problem.

# Facebook advertising

Facebook is not only a great platform for nurturing former and future guests through engaging content, but also a great way to reach a warm audience and drive traffic back to your website. Here are a pair of Facebook ad options we recommend for the booking stage:

## Website click campaigns

The key to running successful “website click” campaigns is to target a very specific audience.

Remarketing paired with other targeting options (demographic, fanbase, interest based, etc.) can help your hotel get in front of the most relevant audience.

And, unlike other advertising channels, Facebook is highly visual, which plays well in the travel space. Use high-quality images and compelling CTAs and offers to increase ad engagement and CTR.

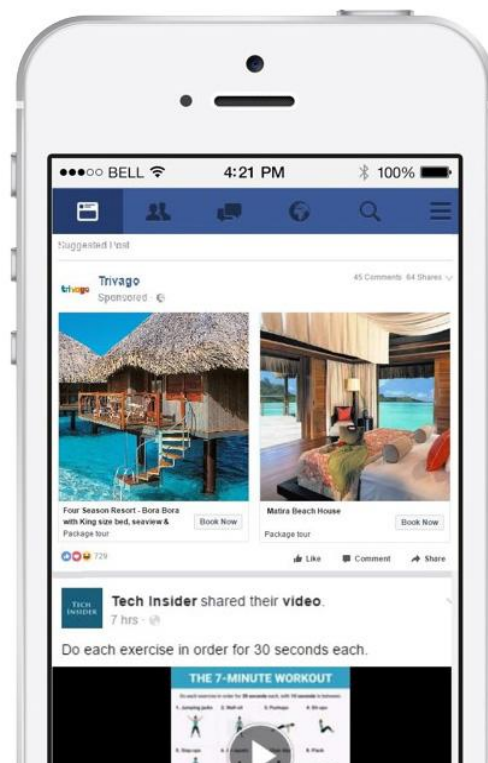
## Dynamic Ads for Travel

Dynamic ads for travel are the perfect product for hotel advertisers. These ads allow the specific retargeting of your hotel’s inventory through Facebook.

Of course, there’s a catch. These ads do require a bit more technical work than other ad formats, so help from your development team may be necessary to link your inventory with Facebook.

However, once that is complete, these ads can dynamically pull room inventory to match a retargeting audience, a key feature that really differentiates them from other advertising options.

Facebook will be able to serve shoppers who visited your website but did not book hyper-relevant ads featuring the exact room and travel dates they were looking at when they abandoned the booking process and display current rates for that unit.



### CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE

You are an independent ski resort in Jackson Hole.

Integrate your hotel’s inventory with the Facebook API to retarget travel shoppers who have completed a room search and viewed a specific room but did not complete a booking.

Test different strategies, like a simple retargeting campaign to remind the shopper of his or her shopping experience paired with a sense of urgency, or even offering a slight discount or an incentive to book now.

Use high-quality room and amenity images to help the shopper imagine themselves at your property.

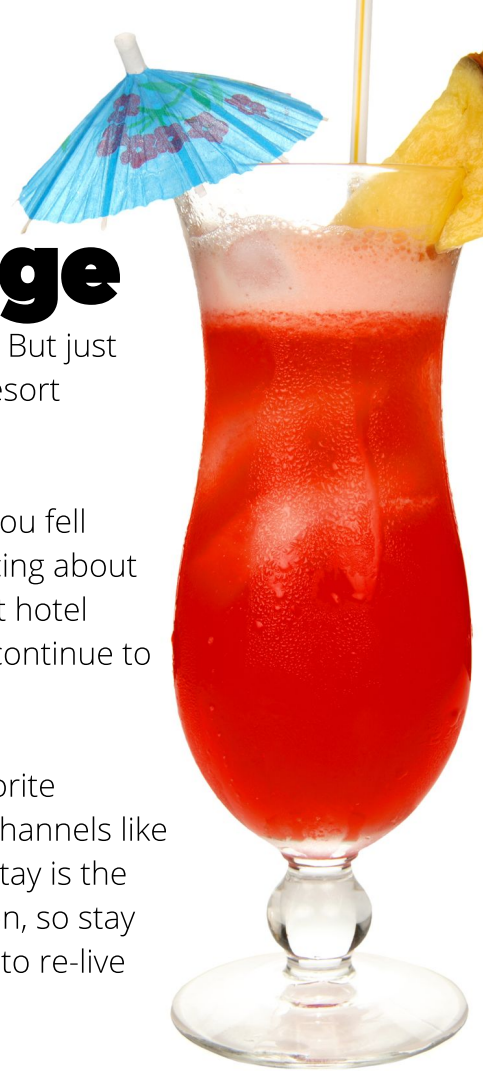


# The Experiencing Stage

Your guest has booked and the vacation is now under way — that's great. But just because you have successfully wooed the guest to stay at your hotel or resort property does not mean your job is done!

Where a transaction traditionally ends with a booking, you'd be remiss if you fell asleep at the wheel while guests were actually enjoying and then reminiscing about their vacation experience. In the always-connected culture of today, smart hotel marketers are taking this part of the process as a serious opportunity to continue to reap the benefits of advertising.

Encourage guests via social media to share their vacation photos and favorite memories. Use post-stay emails to solicit guest feedback and reviews to channels like TripAdvisor, or even your own website. Nurturing your guests after their stay is the best way to get them back in the sales funnel for their next leisure vacation, so stay alert, stay present, and stay in touch to keep those travelers coming back to re-live those experiences and make new memories.



## CHALLENGES

### Are you getting the most out of your current guests?

Making sure your guests are taken care of is always your number one goal, but are your guests also taking care of you by posting on social media and helping you manage a stellar online reputation? At this point, you should be doing everything you can to prompt social interactions and post-stay reviews.

### What are customers saying?

Recent studies suggest that as many as 95% of travelers will look at reviews prior to booking a stay at a hotel — meaning that soliciting new reviews and turning satisfied customers into advocates for your property should be a top priority during this phase.

## GOALS

### Maximize revenue

During the experiencing stage, you want to make sure you are continuing your advertising efforts in order to upsell guests on extras, including late checkout, room service, and other revenue-producing upgrades.

### Generate interaction

During the stay, messaging should focus on highlighting outstanding features and amenities and encouraging guests to engage with your property on social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

# Where to advertise

Here are the top advertising channels for hotels focused on upselling, loyalty & advocacy:

## E-mail

Still one of the most powerful channels in any marketer's toolbox, sending pre-stay and post-stay e-mail is a great way to make your guests feel like you value their stay while also advertising the actions you want them to take during and after their stay.

- **Pre-stay e-mails:** These can be a great chance to remind guests of extras offered on site, including room upgrades, spa packages, show/attraction ticket packages and other upsells that will help you maximize your revenue during their stay.
- **Post-stay e-mails:** One of the best ways around to promote advocacy, post-stay e-mails are the perfect way to prompt guests to head over to TripAdvisor, Yelp or your hotel website to leave a review filled with valuable information for future guests.

## On-site advertising

In this digital world, it's easy to overlook old-school forms of advertising such as printed materials.

That said, during the experiencing stage, ads posted around your property can be particularly effective for informing people about additional services you offer, reminding them to follow your social channels or prompting them share their experience with friends.

Flyers, in-room table tents, room keycards, elevator wraps, bathroom doors, and stand-up banners in the lobby can all be great places to help prompt action during the stay with messaging ranging from promoting upsell packages and late checkouts to encouraging visitors to download your hotel's app.



## Social media

It's no secret that your guests' social activity is at a frenzy during their stay. After all, what better time than during a leisure travel excursion to snap, tweet, and post every moment for the world to see!

All of the most popular social platforms — including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat — offer opportunities to become walking, posting online billboards.

Simple interaction like re-tweeting guests photos and commenting on their Instagram posts can greatly increase guests' willingness to post during their stay while investing in Snapchat filters and targeting Facebook ads to current guests can also be effective if targeted properly.

# Mobile applications

Dedicated mobile apps are a huge and growing trend in the travel space in recent years, which offers several unique opportunities for hotels and their guests during the experiencing stage. Never before have hotels had the ability to communicate so effectively with their guests during their stay.

Having a mobile app for your hotel offers the opportunity to promote on-site revenue-generating amenities such as restaurants or spas and provides a new, untapped method of creating demand during slow periods and increasing revenue. Travelers are also eager to embrace the benefits and the convenience of functionality, such as mobile check-in.

Perhaps the biggest opportunity, though, is the fact that many consumers would be willing to spend more money for added value such as room upgrades and late check-outs.

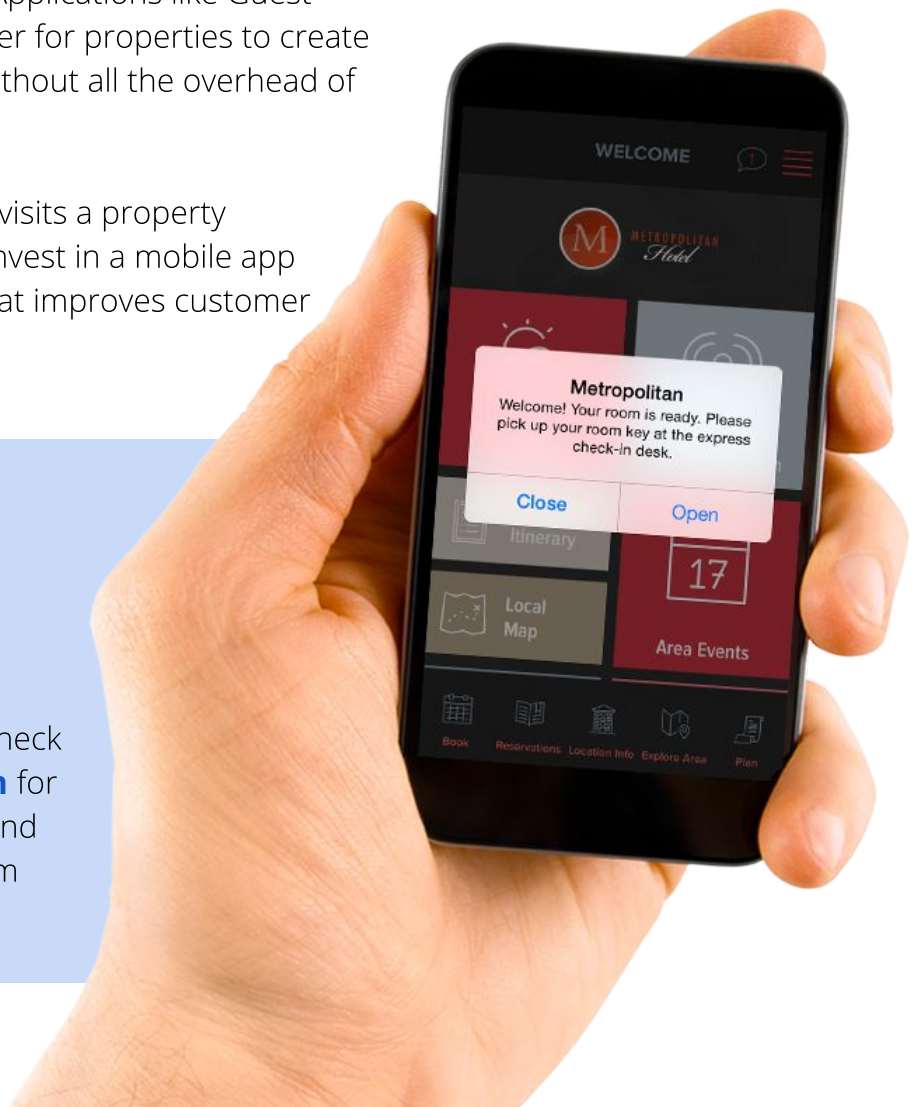
Though investing in app development can be intimidating to some — the return will be worth it. Applications like Guest Express are making it easier than ever for properties to create their own white-labeled hotel app without all the overhead of building an app from scratch.

Regardless of the amount of repeat visits a property experiences, it is time for hotels to invest in a mobile app and develop a marketing strategy that improves customer satisfaction and increases RevPAR.

## MORE INFORMATION

### Guest Express

Want to learn more about what it takes to develop your own mobile application with Guest Express? Check out [www.guestexpressapp.com](http://www.guestexpressapp.com) for details on how to set up a demo and see how we can boost your bottom line.



## CONTACT US

# Ready to kick-start your hotel advertising campaigns?

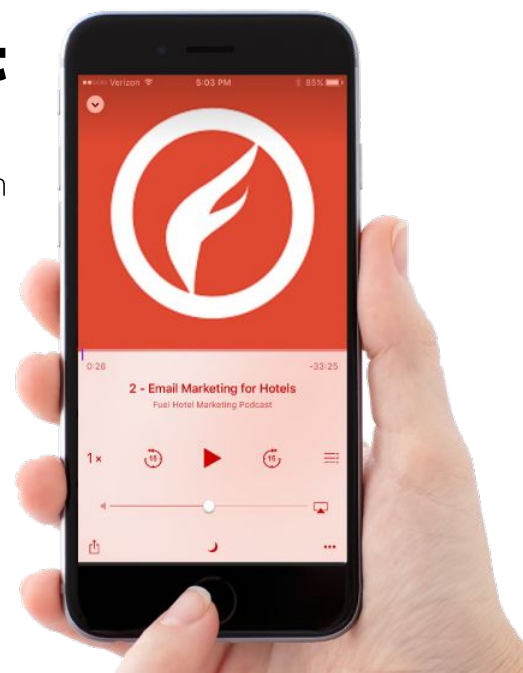
Fuel can help you drive more direct bookings with better ad performance. Our award-winning team of Google-certified hotel marketing specialists will manage and optimize strategically targeted campaigns across all the channels mentioned in this report and more! If you really want to find the best way to be there at every step of the travel journey, let our team help you!

Contact us today at [844-859-8868](tel:844-859-8868) or [info@fueltravel.com](mailto:info@fueltravel.com) or visit [www.fueltravel.com](http://www.fueltravel.com) for a complimentary advertising audit and evaluation!

## The Fuel Hotel Marketing Podcast

The most important 60 minutes of your week! Stay up to date on the latest hotel industry tips, tricks and trends. Each episode is packed with awesome info that will put heads in beds and increase your RevPAR!

Start listening now on any of these great platforms:



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## Meisha Bochicchio

Meisha is a graduate of Anderson University in Anderson, S.C., and serves as a Marketing Specialist for Fuel dealing primarily with pay-per-click advertising and search engine optimization. She is a proud member of Leadership Grand Strand, the American Advertising Federation, the Myrtle Beach Area Hospitality Association, and GSscene Young Professionals.

©2017 by Fuel. All rights reserved. No part of this may be reproduced or distributed in full or in part without approval. To obtain approval, please e-mail [info@fueltravel.com](mailto:info@fueltravel.com). All trademarks are the property of their respective holders.

