

Travel Agent Social Media Adoption Soars in 2015

Passport Online Reports 50% Increase in ESP Customers

Beaverton, OR (January 28, 2016) – Travel industry technology leader Passport Online Inc reports a 50 percent increase in users for ESP, the social media product for travel agents. At the end of 2015, more than 1,400 travel agency Facebook pages were a part of the program, representing almost 1 million consumer followers. This user base is providing statistics and unique data on effective social media strategies for travel agencies.

Since introducing ESP in 2014, the product has successfully helped the travel agency community create more engagement of their Facebook users increasing likes, shares and comments for these businesses. Developed exclusively for travel agents, ESP selects relevant content that posts automatically on designated travel agency Facebook business pages.

“Our ESP customers are embracing social media and reporting significant consumer engagement and actual sales from their ESP posts. The fact that some of our paid supplier posts are among the most shared is proving that consumers are responsive to offers on social media as part of their overall engagement with their travel agency on Facebook,” said Marilyn Macallair, Vice President of Business Development.

For the full year, the average engagement scores for Passport generated Facebook posts were:

- Average Likes: 664
- Average Comments: 69
- Average Shares: 85

The full year of ESP posting also enabled Passport Online to identify strategies for social media success. Among the data now available are best times to post, which lead to the most user engagement, the best types of posts and the success of boosting posts for travel agencies.

The top 5 most successful times to post are listed below. These were determined by the posts that received the highest engagement scores, which represent the most likes, shares and comments:

- Monday – 4pm
- Friday – 8am
- Saturday – 6pm
- Monday – 7am
- Friday – 6am

The posts that attracted the most consumer engagement were destination focused. Question posts that encourage conversation were also high on the list. Celebration day posts such as Cinco de Mayo or National Napping Day also garner strong consumer reaction. Below are the top 5 posts in various categories.

Top 5 Posts – Organic Views (Organic views count all the people who saw a post by a Page on their News Feed, Ticker, or directly on the Page's wall. These are actually followers of a page.)

- 12/26 – Hammock or Beach: Aruba – 83,705 < [view](#) >
- 12/27 – Sunrise: Pentland Hills, Scotland – 72,378 < [view](#) >
- 12/13 – Hammock or Beach: Jamaica – 67,381 < [view](#) >
- 11/8 – Question: Favorite Hawaiian Island – 59,517 < [view](#) >
- 10/4 – Sunrise: Pitt Meadows, British Columbia – 57,667 < [view](#) >

Top 5 Posts – Viral Views (Viral views count all the people who saw a story about a page in their News Feed or Ticker only because one (or more) of their friends did something on a Page. These are NOT current followers of a page and are extending the reach of the travel agency Facebook business page.)

- 10/20 – Quote: Collect Memories, not things – 59,313 < [view](#) >
- 1/3 – Starwood: Beach or Pool at Sheraton Kauai – 33,551 < [view](#) >
- 5/5 – Cinco de Mayo – 33,230 < [view](#) >
- 3/9 – National Napping Day – 32,564 < [view](#) >
- 2/22 – National Margarita Day – 32,010 < [view](#) >

Top 5 Posts – Shares (Consumer shares the post on their personal facebook page)

- 11/8 – Redefine This: Bathtime (Jigokuadni Monkey Park, Japan) – 1,017 < [view](#) >
- 10/20 – Quote: Collect Memories, not things – 944 < [view](#) >
- 3/7 – Time with the locals: Maui, Hawaii – 389 < [view](#) >
- 10/27 – Quote: Not the destination that matters – 364 < [view](#) >
- 1/26 – Snorkeling: Bocas del Toro, Panama – 346 < [view](#) >

Top 5 Posts – Comments (consumer writes a comment on the post)

- 3/9 – National Napping Day – 1,137 < [view](#) >
- 11/8 – Question: Favorite Hawaiian Island – 555 < [view](#) >
- 9/20 – Which one: Fall USA – 541 < [view](#) >
- 4/19 – Which one: Parks/Gardens – 530 < [view](#) >
- 1/10 – Which one: Caribbean Beaches – 511 < [view](#) >

Top 5 Posts – Likes (consumer clicks the like button)

- 11/8 – Question: Favorite Hawaiian Island – 13,484 < [view](#) >

- 8/7 – National Lighthouse Day – 3,980 < [view](#) >
- 10/20 – Quote: Collect Memories, not things – 3,968 < [view](#) >
- 1/26 – Snorkeling: Bocas del Toro, Panama – 3,646 < [view](#) >
- 3/7 – Time with the locals: Maui, Hawaii – 3,518 < [view](#) >

Educating the travel professional community on the value of boosting posts has become an integral part of Passport Online’s social media strategy. The growth of paid posts (which reflect travel agency page owners paying to have a post boosted) grew by 93 percent in 2015 with more than 300 posts boosted by agency owners.

Top 5 Posts – Paid Views

- 3/7 – Time with the Locals: Maui, Hawaii – 40,686 < [view](#) >
- 1/15 – Valentine’s Surprise – 33,949 < [view](#) >
- 1/26 – Snorkeling: Bocas del Toro, Panama – 31,297 < [view](#) >
- 1/3 – Dreaming of Paris? – 29,135 < [view](#) >
- 12/31 – Who needs a beach day: Nha Trang, Vietnam – 23,110 < [view](#) >

Twist Travel owner and ESP customer Danielle Rockett has embraced ESP and added her own power and customer engagement to the product to catapult her Facebook fanbase. When she started using ESP in 2014, she had less than 100 followers. Today, Twist Travel’s business Facebook page has more than 3,000 followers. Rockett began boosting certain posts with inexpensive options through Facebook and grew her engagement significantly. Facebook is now a strong source of customer interaction and lead generation for Twist Travel.

About Passport Online

Passport Online is the leisure travel industry leader in website, web content, email marketing, and social media solutions. Passport also offers state of the art cruise booking engine solutions for b-to-b and b-to-c needs. A major distribution channel for leisure travel suppliers to connect with the leading consortia, retail agencies, professional home-based agent networks, and their clients, Passport Online enables millions of consumer shopping sessions on thousands of travel agency websites. For more information visit www.passportonlineinc.com or view our corporate video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLcwbHwk9QI&feature=youtu.be>