

Travel Earth's Digital Influencers' Convention and Earthy Awards

Case Study 2019



THE EARTHY
AWARDS



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Executive Summary: How Travel Earth's understanding of global travel and digital trends set the course for a unique event proposal

The tourism industry is witnessing high growth in outbound travel globally, with India emerging as the fastest growing outbound tourism market in the world, second only to China. UNWTO estimates that India will account for 50 million outbound tourists by 2020. Globally and in India, Millennials are the largest demographic group, characterised as digitally connected individuals with high levels of disposable income. This demographic is not only driving consumptions, but are looking to spend their incremental expenses on experiences and prefer customisation. This makes Indian Millennials (at 440 million of the country's total population) a prime target for outbound tourism.

Digital disruption and driving awareness through online platforms is making waves in the marketing world. Digitally savvy Millennials are shifting more and more towards sourcing information from online sources, such as web browsing or social media than offline traditional marketing models. There is also a tendency to seek recommendations from first hand experiences of trusted sources before making decisions or purchases. Social media influence is playing a large role here. Influencers manage to gather a following over months and years for their content, authenticity and first-hand experiences - and reaching these audiences is the goal for most brands.

This is where Travel Earth, an industry-leading travel-centric digital media company comes into the picture. Travel Earth understands the power of digital and uses it to create content and spread awareness about travel. Travel Earth is able to leverage digital disruption by understanding the target audience, by building a growing network of influencers, by growing their own social presence and by creating unique and customised content. Travel Earth has an ongoing partnership with Sabah Tourism Board (STB). Having worked with Travel Earth before STB expressed their desire, and a challenge they faced in fulfilling that desire. By understanding the challenges and to address specific pain points faced by STB, Travel Earth proposed the concept of the Digital Influencers' Convention and Earthy Awards. The event went on to not only address the challenges faced by STB but by and large was extremely successful in creating a phenomenal impact in the virtual world and stood out as a first-of-its-kind concept in the online travel influencer community.

The following case study elaborates on the challenges, approach and results of the event.

What the Indian market means to Sabah Tourism and the challenges faced by STB in tapping the full potential of this market

The relation between the Indian market and Sabah

Sabah is a beautiful state to the East of Malaysia. It is separated from Mainland Malaysia by the South China Sea. While Malaysia had over 600,000 visitors from India in 2018, only 5600 visited Sabah.

Reasons were mainly lack of awareness of the region. There was a need to showcase the area at its best to the Indian market.

India is an emerging market for Sabah Tourism in terms of visitors for tourism.

Sabah Tourism's requirements in relation to the Indian market

Sabah Tourism Board (STB) was looking to jumpstart the Indian Market and increase inflow of tourism from India to Sabah with an aim to get at least 50,000 visitors from India in 2020.

For Sabah Tourism, there was a need to break through the clutter of tourism promotions with relatively smaller budgets. A high impact promotion and awareness campaign was required at lower economic costs.

The challenges faced by STB in tapping the Indian market

Lack of Awareness

The Indian Market was largely unaware of the existence of Sabah. Awareness was required to showcase the beauty and highlights of the destination to get potential visitors.

Limited Budgets

STB had to work with relatively smaller budgets and found it challenging to do extensive campaigns. A high impact campaign was needed to accelerate awareness without impeding budgets.

Targeting the market

The Indian market is huge and versatile. An impactful campaign was required to identify and target the right audience sets, particularly Millennials, to drive conversations with faster visibility in a shorter time span.

Travel Earth's approach to resolving the challenges faced by STB and the results of a successful campaign

Approach

Travel Earth's approach was to drive awareness digitally through the largest digital convention comprising of travel influencers and content creators - the Digital Influencers' Convention (DIC).

From an initially projected goal of 300 million reach, DIC was extremely successful and exceeded all perceived metrics as showcased in the outcome.

DIC took place in Kota Kinabalu, from 27th - 28th June, 2019 at Shangri La's Rasa Ria Resort and Spa. The convention was a 2-day affair with several enriching sessions around the digital marketing trends in the world and 2 days of exploring the destination to drive awareness through content and social media outreach.

Participants were chosen from over 300 applications after a thorough and careful vetting process of their profiles involving 2-stages of applications. The entire process has enabled Travel Earth to understand this community better than others.

Outcome

53 of the biggest travel influencers in the digital world were brought together to drive awareness for the relevant audience set - namely Millennials

It resulted in a reach of 1.1 Billion and an engagement rate of 2.2 million in the virtual world.

Usage of proprietary hashtags #WhyNotSabah and #Earthys2019 helped drive awareness and track data accurately.

A tracking mechanism was used to capture sentiment analysis through verb and noun phrase word clouds showcasing positive, neutral and negative sentiments.

The dollar value output of the event far exceeded \$15,000,000

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