



10 BIGGEST MISTAKES
THAT RETAILERS AND BRANDS MAKE
WHEN INTERACTING WITH TRAVELING SHOPPERS

I N T R O

Dear Friends,

Constant innovation and rapid advancement are the significant characteristics of the time we live in. These turbulent developments do not leave the travel retail industry untouched. Compared to many other industries, travel retail is already falling behind. To catch up, retailers and brands need to broaden their horizon and open up their mentality towards the technical enhancement laying at their feet. Take a look around, and discover the enormous potential of the digital world.

Nowadays, the desired target group of traveling shoppers grows more and more tech savvy and demanding. They are spoiled by the digital convenience they are used to in their everyday life. Not actively engaging with them on their native channels simply means you do not exist to them. Many retailers underestimate the potential of this particular target group. Even the ones who try to target them run easily into difficulties of choosing the right channel, or sending the right message to guide them down to the sales funnel.

Global Smiling would like to support you by presenting the “10 Biggest Mistakes That Retailers and Brands Make When Interacting With Traveling Shoppers”. In doing this, we aim to offer you the effective ways to tackle the challenges facing the travel retail industry. Kick back and enjoy reading these common mistakes. Let yourself be inspired as to what can be improved in terms of interacting with traveling shoppers.

Seeking more advice for your business with traveling shoppers? Just drop us an email or give us a call. We like to listen and help.

Your Global Smiling Team



MISTAKE #1:

Not speaking your customer's language

#1:

The convention goes that shoppers are constrained by time and opportunity when they travel. For TR/DF, it is easy to assume that these traveling shoppers are able and willing to adapt to whatever is presented to them in a shopping environment. However, as mobility and connectivity are rapidly eroding the traditional TR/DF industry, traveling shoppers have become increasingly independent and demanding before, during and after their purchase.

Nowadays, selling means communicating. In order for something to be communicated to consumers, it needs to be in a language they speak, not industry speak. Some cases in point, are you still highlighting Sales & Discounts in front Chinese traveling shoppers instead of greeting them with a simple but fit-in Ni Hao? Are you still leading Russian traveling shoppers to the most expensive and luxurious section instead of saying Privet and offering in-store product tryouts?

Speaking your consumers' languages does not only mean linguistic competence, but also the culture awareness that is embedded in the conversation with traveling shoppers from other countries. In a digital context, this indicates that the language and cultural appreciation need to be properly transferred to website, e-Commerce platform, in-store digital assistants, and social media channels.

As the historical advantage of TR/DF, preferential pricing, is receding, communicating with traveling shoppers in a language that conveys clarity, respect and genuineness becomes essential for satisfying their multifaceted demands.

{ MISTAKE #2:

Being distant from
social media



#2:

Travel retail rivals those online retailers in terms of its offline presence. This advantage, however, does not offer guarantee for the customer acquisition or retention, especially when we look at the overwhelming sales figure contributed by cross-border e-Commerce platforms, online marketplaces and various e-shops.

In order to strengthen competitiveness, travel retail needs to step into the online world. This move does not necessarily mean establishing an online shop, but rather joining the battle of acquiring social audience. Social Media Platforms, in this case, become the main battlefield.

Build your social audience in the right social media platforms and get them to spread the love for your products and services. Not only will this make getting the word out easier, but it can make a night-and-day difference in the amount of foot-traffic you can expect your social presence to drive to your store. This social force does not end at the point of purchase. Its very power is unleashed right after the purchase: social audience start to transform into your brand ambassadors to attract new customers for your business (let's assume they like your products).

After all, shopping is a social behavior. The experience of shopping requires sharing. Travel retail should be aware of the power of social media, especially when it comes to the group of traveling shoppers, because they can share the genuine first-hand information online for those consumers who are ready to buy.



{ MISTAKE #3:

Low responsiveness in
customer care

#3:

Nowadays waiting in line for a response is the last move customers would go for when they have requests. Interconnectivity by advanced technology leads to a high level of responsiveness and a multi-channel system in customer care.

In the travel retail and duty free industry, the importance of customer care is easily underrated, as many retailers regard traveling shoppers as "buy-and-bye" shoppers. This is exactly the reason why retailers cannot compete with those online marketplaces in terms of customer acquisition and retention.

A good service of a retailer can never be achieved without a responsive customer care. Establish a professional team for handling customer requests, delegate the well-trained staff online and offline, and diversify the channels that customers can reach out to. All this can not only satisfy your customers' needs, but also receive feedback for the further improvement of your business.

Bear in mind that traveling shoppers will always get back to you regardless of where and when, in particular, when it comes to price comparison, product quality, and personal emotion to your in-store service.

{ MISTAKE #4:

Being invisible in
the digital world



#4:

Do you remember how you chose the destination of your last vacation? Did you rely on personal recommendation, travel blogs or did you simply choose where you always wanted to go? Regardless of where your inspiration for the destination came from, you started to inform yourself as soon as you knew where you would go. In this phase, you talk to family, friends and colleagues. You were keen about every bits and pieces of info that you could obtain. Soon you typed your vacation destination into a search engine and were curious about what would pop up. Even during your holiday, you consulted your best friend, the search engine, whenever you needed. When you look for something to do on a rainy afternoon or feeling hungry, search engine happen to be the tour guide right at our finger tips.

Just like you, traveling shoppers display the same behavior when they go on their next shopping trip. They crave for information about shopping opportunities, best shopping experiences and best deals in their vacation destination. Eventually they will start to consult a search engine for inspiration and ideas.

If you do not have a digital presence at their primary source of information you basically do not exist. The only way they will be able to find some information about you is to dig up comments and recommendations on social media. As a consequence, you leave your brand education in the hand of some unknown commentators. So roll up your sleeves and get your word out there. Establish a digital presence to attract traveling shoppers and guide them down the sales funnel. Be proactive and meet the traveling shoppers at their digital home base. Engage with them and communicate your values and offers. Do not let them shape their opinion based on a second hand experience.

{ MISTAKE #5:

Underestimating the spending power of traveling shoppers



#5:

One of the biggest mistakes in the travel retail business is to oversee the massive potential of traveling shoppers. Traveling shoppers are a diverse group of people. Despite their differences, they do have one thing in common: they like to travel with the primary goal in mind - shopping. They chase the super deal, search for novel items, crave for quality products. In principle, they want to buy all that they cannot buy at home.

These particular shopping behaviors can be easily observed within the tourist groups of Chinese, Russian and Middle Eastern travelers. These nationalities love to make the most of their holidays and buy souvenirs and presents not only for themselves but also for their friends and families back home.

Many retailers do not realize the potential of these traveling shoppers. Most retailers are blind folded by the excuse: "First, we need to cater to the majority of our customers, which are domestic". However, reality shows that traveling shoppers spend 10 times more money for their purchase than domestic shoppers, which makes them 10 times more valuable to you compared to domestic shoppers. It is worth noting that more often than not you have more chances to convince a domestic shopper to shop whereas for traveling shoppers you have only one single chance. Otherwise, they will buy somewhere else.

So start working with traveling shoppers now and do not miss out on this prosperous market. Open up channels to communicate and educate the traveling shoppers about your brand and sales offers. Let them know you exist! Design your shops more friendly and train your staff to make your shop more attractive. Do not wait until other companies have established a market leading position.



MISTAKE #6:

Neglecting real-time
targeting

#6:

As we all know, traveling shoppers inform themselves well before travel. And that is only the beginning: the customer journey does not stop at gathering pre-travel information; on the contrary, the journey in the destination just starts as soon as they put a foot on the ground.

Traveling shoppers are deal hunters. They are very proud of their ability of tracking down the best shop locations. You will be impressed by their flexibility towards their meticulously planned time schedule when you present them with a great deal. Attract them with appealing offers and send them call-to-action messages. They will make sure to squeeze time to visit your store.

Many retailers and brands solely rely on targeting campaigns prior to travel stage. Instead of squandering money on scattering campaigns all over the place, why not try targeting traveling shoppers in their destination via geo-bound and real time campaigns? The key to successfully attracting traveling shoppers to your store is to pulling the following aspects together: the right time, the right place and the right message. Fulfilling these three criteria will bring you a competitive advantage of driving traveling shoppers to your store.



{ MISTAKE #7:

Big Data is “too Big”
for my business

#7:

Big Data is not only a fancy buzz-word, but rather the essence of competitive advantage for business growth and sustainability in the larger travel industry. However most decisions makers working with traveling shoppers think that handling big data is simply “too big” for them to care about. This is a misconception. There are many cost-effective and efficient tools that can help you to base your campaigns and marketing decisions on data rather than on intuition. The effectiveness and conversion of a data-based decision, which is even provided by your very own business, is enormous. Strangely, it is not used by most decision makers.



MISTAKE #8:

No brand storytelling

#8:

Internet users become less aware the mainstream, un-personalized and irrelevant advertising forms like banners and ads. It is in the human's nature to listen and read with great interest to well-written and interesting short stories and experiences. Most retailers and brands completely neglect this opportunity to write about their values and offers in the traveler's context. Embedding your business proposition into well-written story and provide valuable content for the travelers is low-cost and most effective tool which is completely neglected by most players of the larger travel retail industry.

{ MISTAKE #9:

Not providing pre-travel information



#9:

Most Inter-Continental Traveling Shoppers from Asia, Middle East or the Americas plan their trips to Europe ahead and in detail. This includes online research on best flight connections, accommodation, transportation as well as sight-seeings and many more. However, it is completely neglected by most retailers and brands that those affluent travelers also search for exclusive recommendations on best shopping experiences. Most retailers and brands do not use the opportunities to be listed in the relevant catalogues, leading travel-websites and platforms, local travel blogs or simply enabling the availability of their websites in the language of the relevant markets. As a result most players miss to be noted and listed in the traveler's plans and lose valuable sales and profits.



MISTAKE #10:

No tailor-made offers to serve the travelers' need



#10:

A complete shopping loop consists of many aspects, such as information search, recommendation seeking, tryout phase, logistics solution, after sales service, and so on. For traveling shoppers, they need to cover as many these aspects as possible when they shop on the road. And it is even more so for those whose primary traveling activity is shopping. In this case, adjusting the offers to help traveling shoppers fulfill these aspects becomes essential for travel retail.

A case in point, given the restrictions and the enormous costs of excess luggage weight, travelers do not buy many products in the variety and to the extent that they would prefer. Servicing the clients with personalized logistics solutions to support and ease the buying experience would increase sales volumes and profits.

ABOUT GLOBAL SMILING

Global Smiling is the digital marketing agency with a special focus on traveling shoppers. The Hamburg office, Chongqing office and Moskow office work closely together to bring you the outstanding communication handling, marketing strategy & implementation, Google campaigns, Facebook ads, and tailor-made social media management. Our goal is to provide bespoke solutions leading to the high brand awareness and broad business reach to traveling shoppers.

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