

# TRAVEL AGENCIES NEED TO RE-EVALUATE THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIAL MEDIA



Technology is a vital resource for tourism brands and companies need to embrace it to stay ahead of the competition and encourage new business: that is the message that has been sent out across the global industry for months following reports and forecasts but it seems some travel agencies are still ignoring the potential of social media. Because the market is so saturated, companies need to establish their niche and clientèle and social media is the ideal way to create an individual, online presence and build on successes; unfortunately, a survey on technology and web usage from ASTA shows that two fifths of agents asked fail to see the value in social media platforms and only one fifth is convinced that having a strong social media connection is essential.

## **Why do these businesses have this attitude to social media and what needs to change?**

There are too many companies that still seem to believe that social media is for nothing more than acquiring new customers when it has actually been proven to help businesses engage with them after their initial purchase or interaction. Social media is much less about sales and more about creating relationships; this is where travel agencies are going drastically wrong in their assumptions and it is this misunderstanding that could be crucial in their future endeavours. This mindset could prove to be problematic for these business because a disinterest or lack of awareness in the true worth of these channels means that money is not being invested effectively. In fact, many of those asked were not investing in social media because they felt it was unlikely to create direct revenue, which suggests they are not considering the indirect revenue and customer relationships at all.

Essentially, this insight into the status of social media in travel agencies suggests that a surprising majority need to re-evaluate their understanding of these resources, switching from an old-fashioned, negative view about poor direct income to one that focuses on the greater potential for expanding a business model and client relationships for better prospects in the future.

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