

A man wearing a straw hat, glasses, a maroon sweater, and a yellow backpack is standing on a train platform. He is looking down at his smartphone. The platform has tracks in the foreground and a red railing in the background. The scene is lit with warm, indoor lighting.

Why Travelers Aren't Using DMO Websites

 CrowdRiff

CrowdRiff's visual marketing platform is used by over **130 DMOs** across the globe.

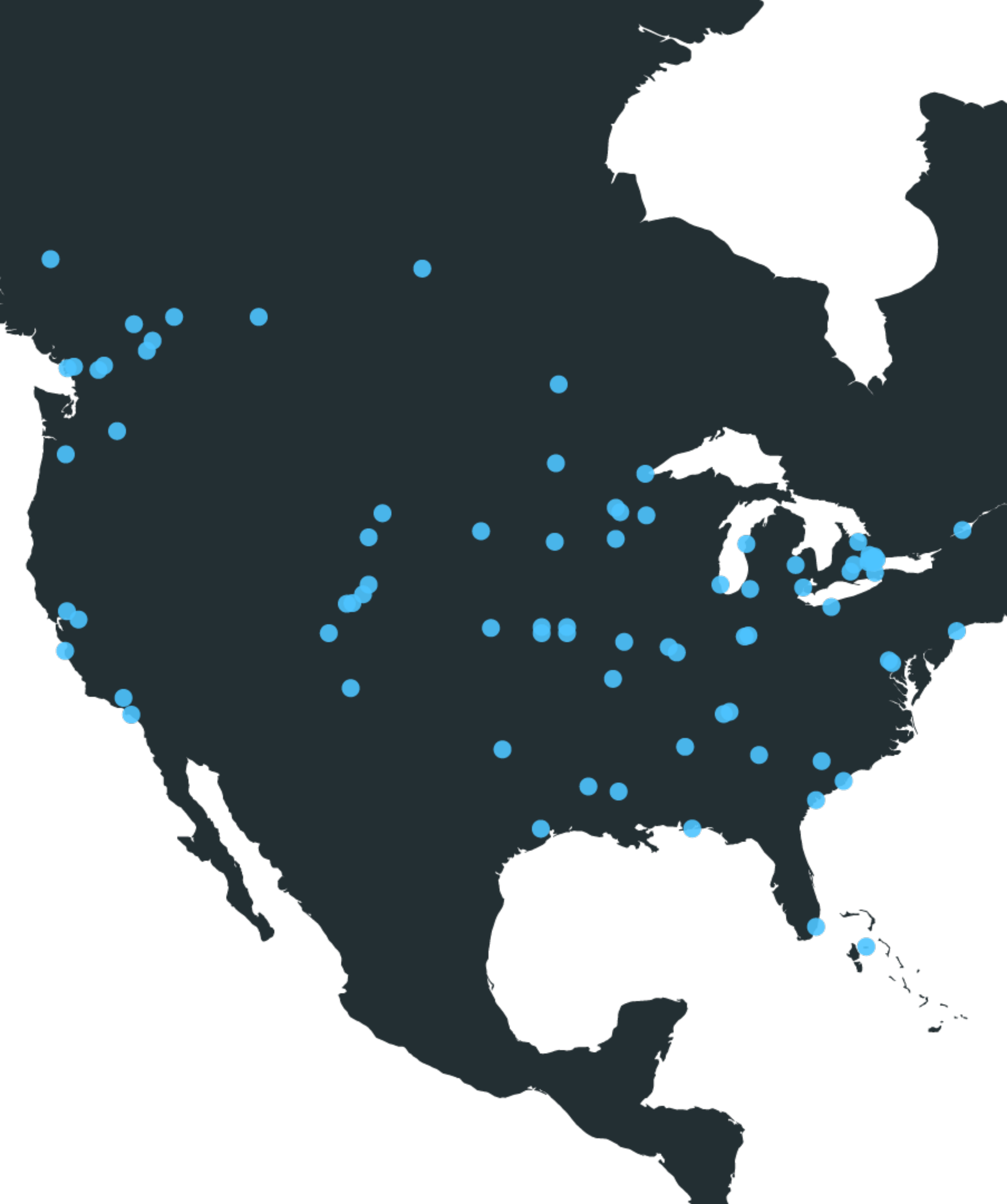
Destination
British Columbia™



TOURISME /
MONTREAL



travel
PORTLAND



In this ebook

1. The traveler buying process
2. 7 issues with DMO websites
3. How to make your DMO website appealing to travelers



Trends in Consumer Behavior

To make your website appealing to a modern consumer, first you have to understand what makes them tick. These are 4 trends in consumer behaviors and buying preferences all travel marketers should pay attention to:



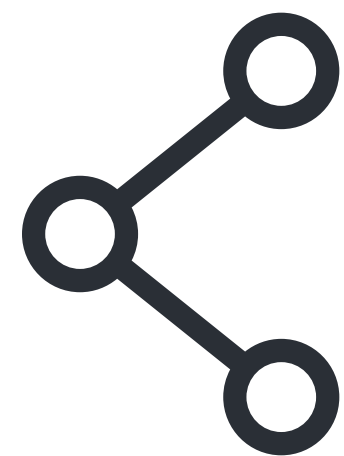
Preferring experiences over ownership

52% of consumers 18-34 prefer to spend their money on experiences versus 39% among older shoppers¹



Trusting peers over advertising

Word of mouth is still the most trusted source of information, with 92% of consumers trusting friends and family over advertising².



Sharing experiences over social media

76% of travelers post vacation photos to social networks³.



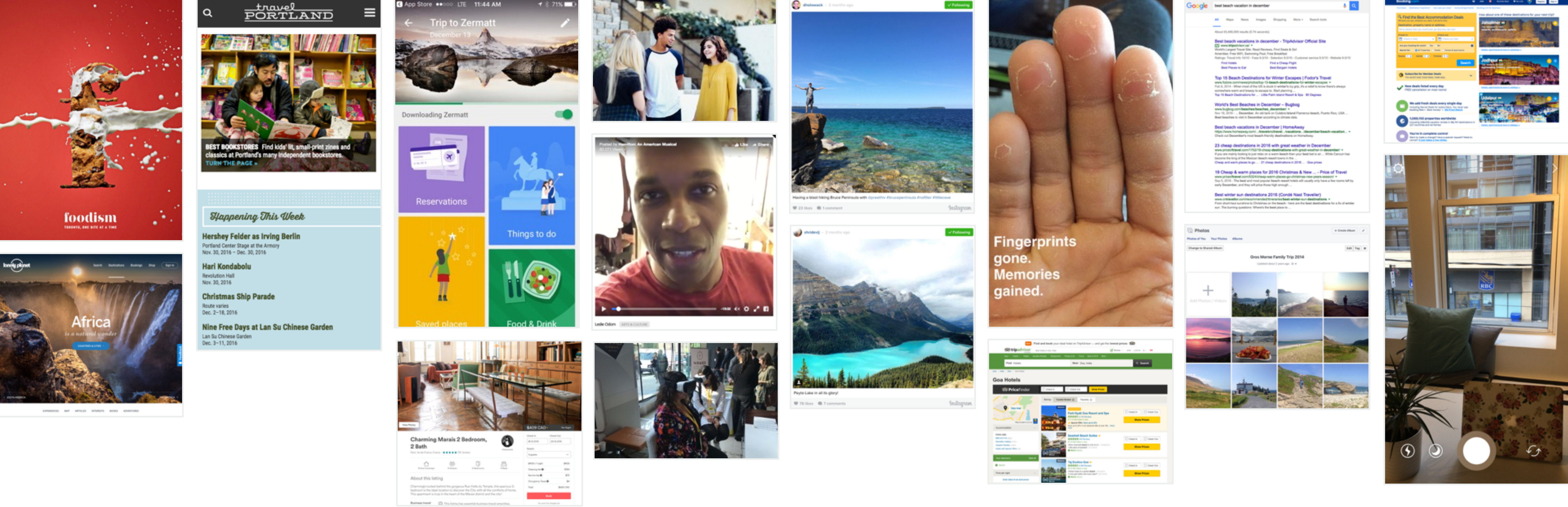
Visual decision making

People are increasingly turning to photos and videos to decide what to do, where to go, what to buy

¹<http://www.marketingmag.ca/consumer/millennials-want-experiences-not-stuff-column-164421>

²<http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/reports-downloads/2012/global-trust-in-advertising-and-brand-messages.html>

³<http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/social-media-and-travel-go-hand-in-hand-infographic/625230>



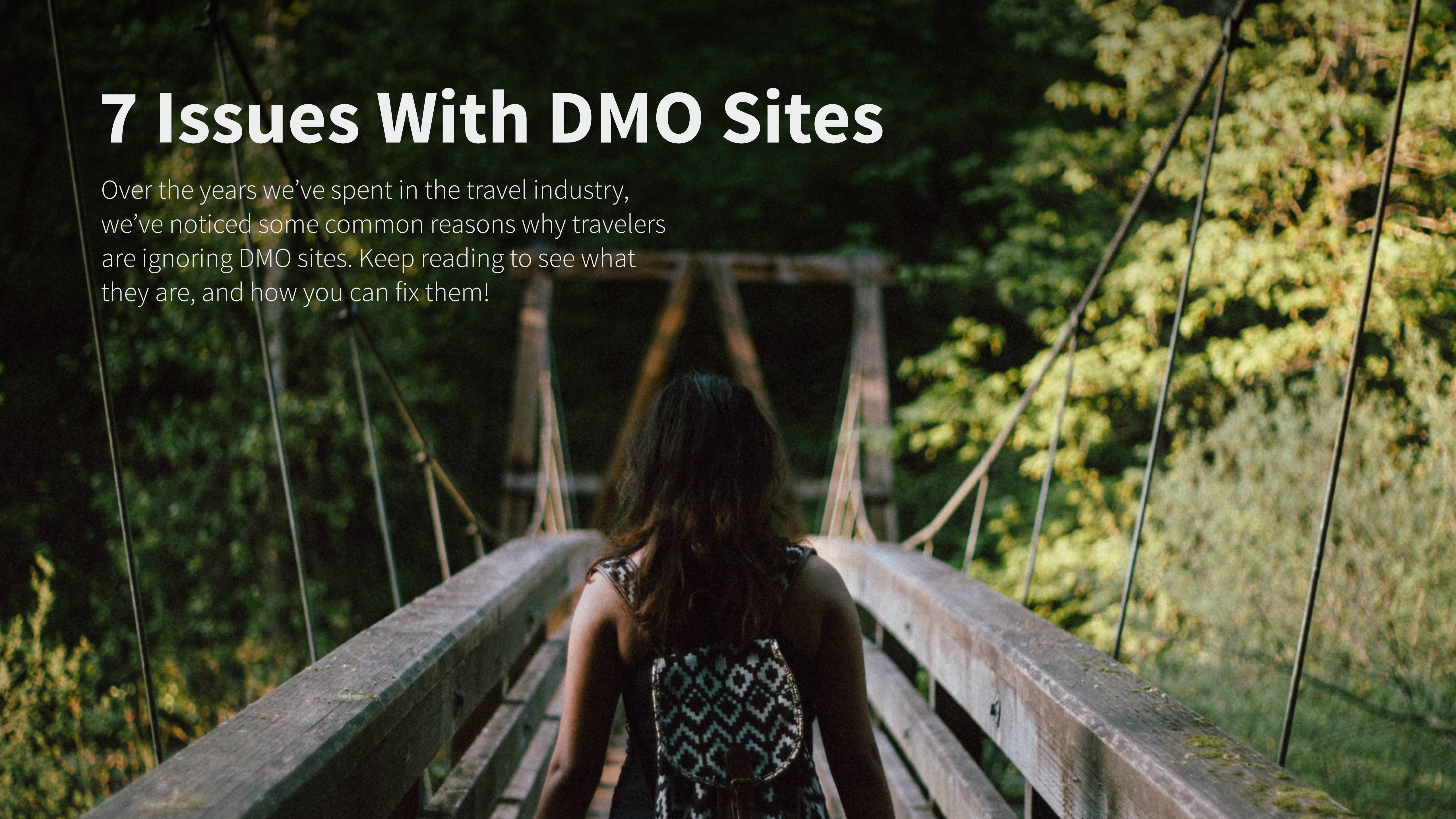
A typical traveler visits 34 websites over 8.5 sessions¹

The traveler buying process is highly disjointed. Most people turn to a number of different sources when it comes to discovering, planning, and booking their travel. This is the obstacle that makes it hard for some DMOs to stay relevant -- but at the same time it's also an opportunity to make your DMO website an authoritative source of content.

¹ Clayton Reid, CEO, MMGY

7 Issues With DMO Sites

Over the years we've spent in the travel industry, we've noticed some common reasons why travelers are ignoring DMO sites. Keep reading to see what they are, and how you can fix them!





1 | **Your site only shares well-known tourist spots**

Does your destination cater to niche tourist interests? If so, foodies, art hounds, hikers, and craft beer enthusiasts, for example, will all be looking for more than the typical tourist sights from your website.

Imagine a New York travel site that only talked about Times Square — there's nothing that differentiates this site as an authority on New York.

If you keep points of interest too general on your website, you may risk getting passed over in favor of more “best kept secret” websites and blogs about your destination.

2 | Your website isn't visually striking

Marketers behind the most innovative DMO sites know that from the moment a web visitor lands on their destination site, they have 8 seconds to grab their interest.

Especially now that people are accustomed to our new age of visual media — if your website doesn't give a great first impression with a visual impact, visitors will be more likely to click away and never come back.





3 | Your website's visuals are stale

When you feature commissioned photos on your website, it's easy to leave them up for months, even years. Partly because it's expensive and time-consuming to regularly commission photos, and partly because updating photos on a website often requires web development resources.

But a lack of up-to-date images can make site visitors feel like no one's home. They'll be compelled to look elsewhere for more relevant information.

4 | Your site feels more like a directory

It's not enough for your website to list out the best restaurants, local attractions, and landmarks. You don't want to just be a directory — you want to tell a story, to capture people's imaginations and inspire them to visit.

While visitors may be looking for something specific (like charming local hotspots), the way you present the information and your connection to it can make it enticing.





5 | Your photos look too perfect

The reason why sites like Instagram have become popular with travelers is because they can show an authentic, unfiltered view of the sights, sounds, and activities of a destination.

For example, if your website features a photo of a pristine beach, it will get people's attention, yes — but they might be skeptical that the beach looks like that during peak season.

6 | Your site doesn't direct users to relevant information

Imagine you're on a website that raves about a local restaurant. It's got fantastic pictures and glowing descriptions... but no link to the restaurant's website, or any information about how you can make a reservation.

Chances are you're not going to jump through hoops tracking down the official restaurant website, right? Or if you do, it's more work for you. Either way, it's not a great experience -- and you want to make sure your website doesn't do that.





7 | People just don't know about your website

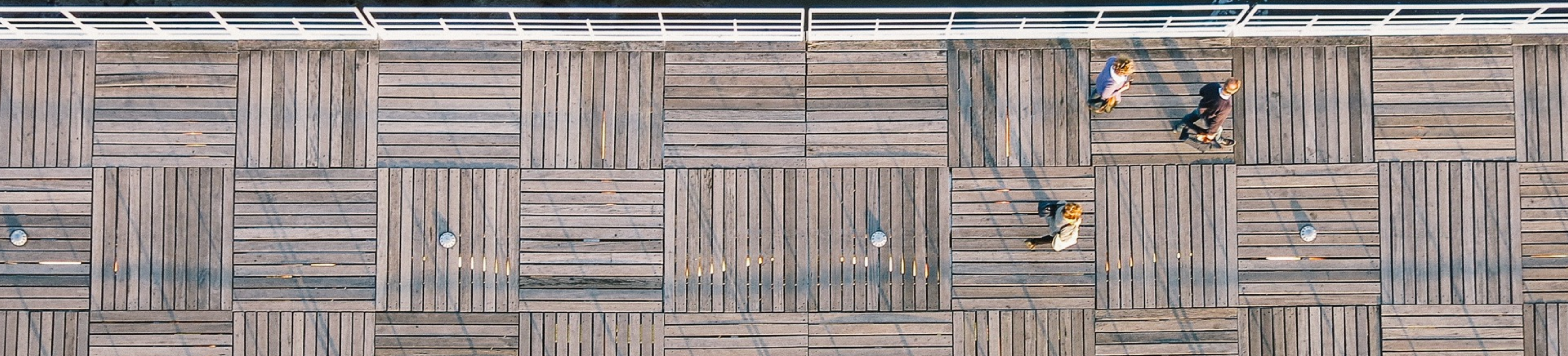
Perhaps this sounds obvious, but it's one of the most common reasons why travelers overlook DMO websites.

With so many other places to start trip planning, like [social media](#) or travel sites like [TripAdvisor](#), sometimes travelers just don't think to look for it.

This is especially true if your website doesn't rank well in search, or if you are quiet or absent on social networks where travelers are most active.

Getting Your DMO Website To Rise Above The Noise

Here are some key improvements you can start thinking about, to transform your website into an essential resource for travelers.

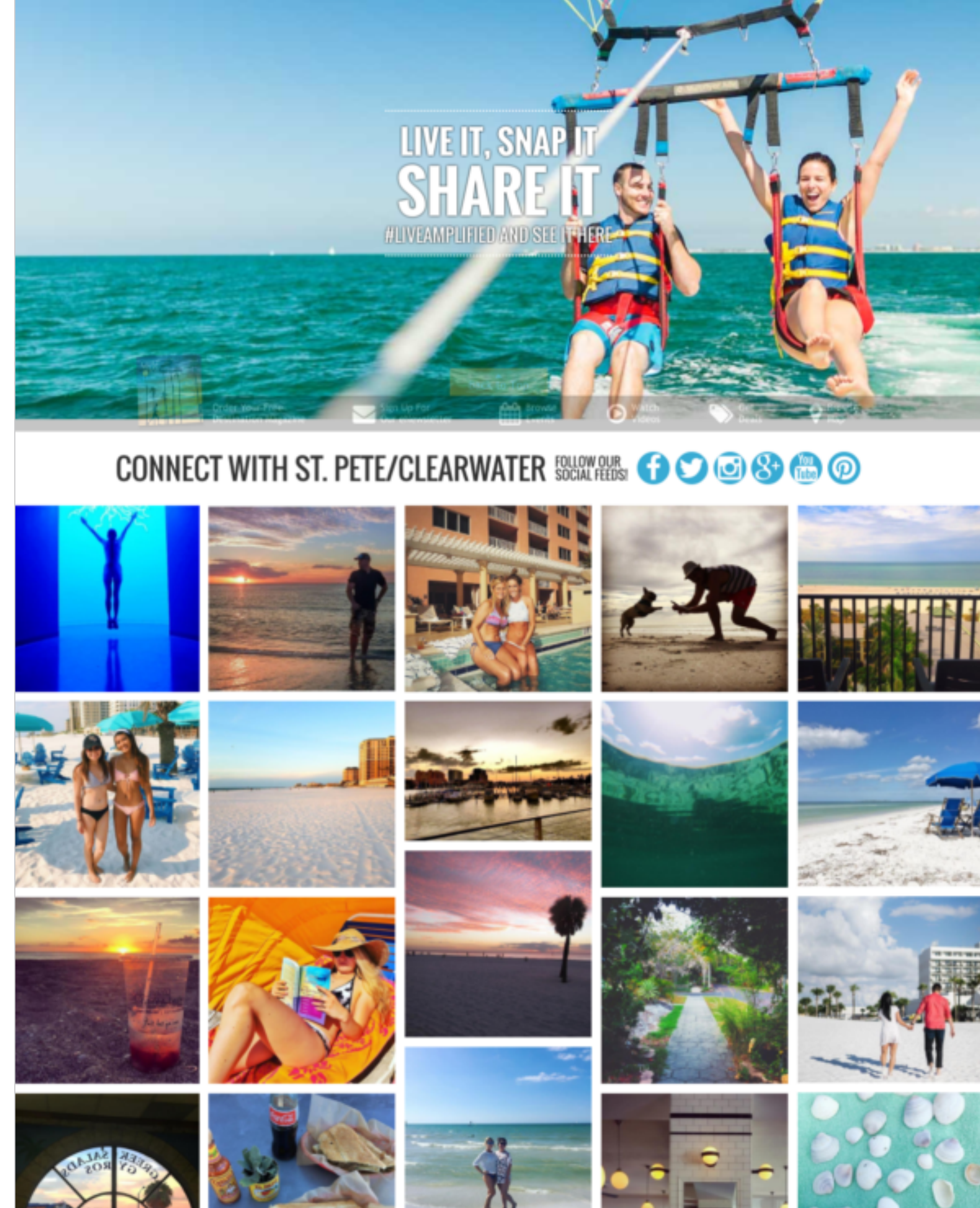


Embrace your brand story

For example, are you a nature lover's oasis? A family getaway spot? Focusing on that angle of your brand's "personality" will allow you to [create a visual story](#) that will magnetize new tourists and customers to you.

[St. Petersburg-Clearwater](#), for example, is a beach vacation spot in Florida — but they don't just list beaches on their website.

They curate the best traveler photos that showcase their unique vacation experience — places you can visit. You don't just see one or two photos of someone on a beach. You see such a variety and volume of imagery that you feel compelled to be a part of it too.





Use social media to bring people to your website

Travelers are already on social media to discover destinations for upcoming vacations and events.

Create and share interesting content that drives back to your website, like Destination Cleveland's Tweet (see left). If you have a visitor guide on your website or interesting blog posts, share them on social! The occasional social contest that requires people to go to your website can also give a needed boost of traffic around key times of the year.

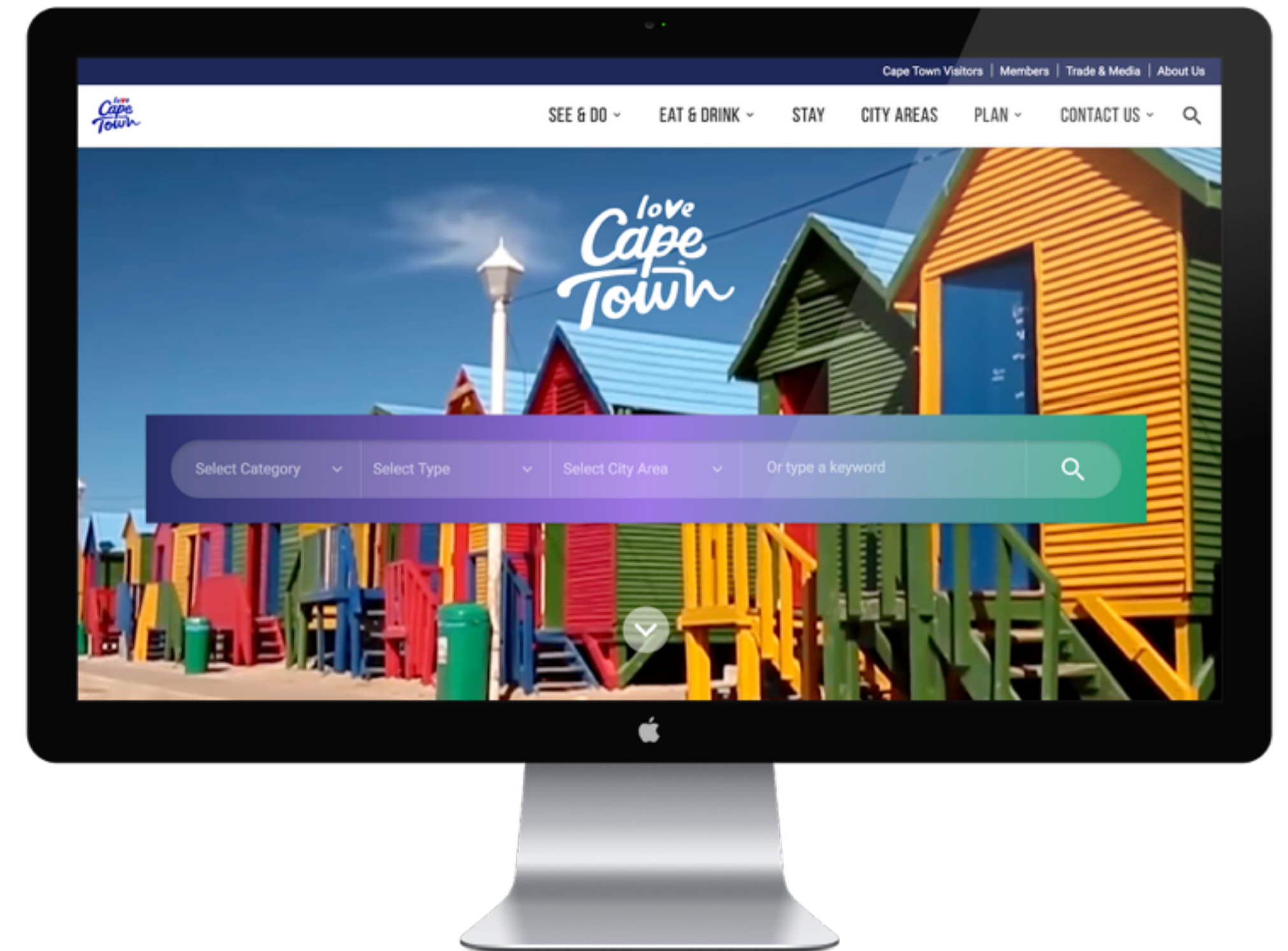
Don't underestimate the value of being the authority on your destination by being the best source of both content and visuals on the things visitors are browsing social for.

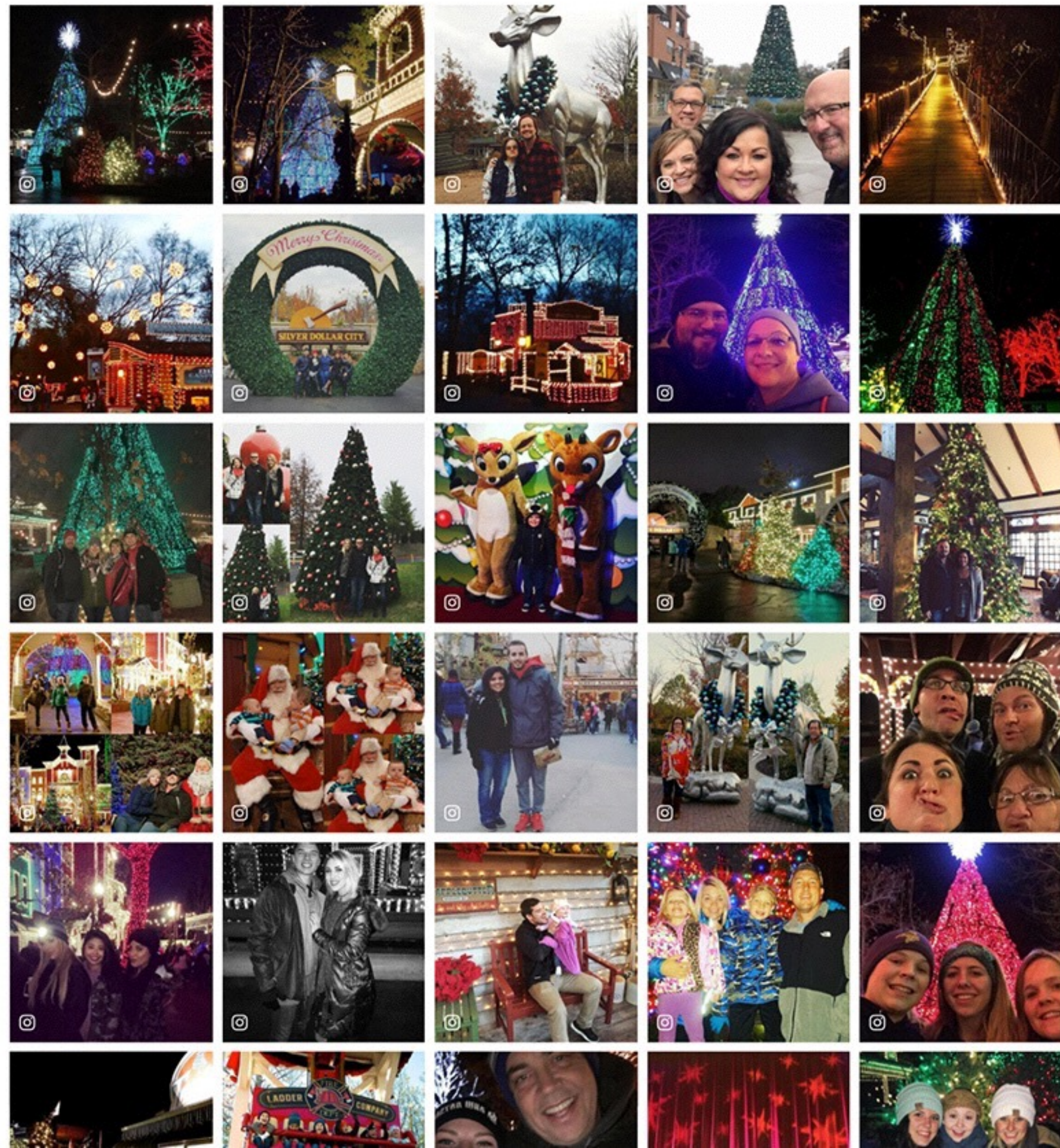
Make an amazing first impression

Make sure all your landing pages — from your homepage to your blog posts — wow your visitors with stunning visuals.

Some [DMO websites](#) are sitting on the cutting-edge by embedding auto-playing videos onto their homepages, to captivate visitors from the get-go.

With video, you can tell a high-level story of your destination within 5 seconds — which is enough to inspire attention.





Update your visuals regularly

Keep your website's visuals up to date and abundant, and people won't need to go elsewhere to find photos of what you're like.

One thing that's been popular with DMOs we work with is displaying user-generated photos on galleries on their websites.

Because the thing is -- your visitors are taking, tagging, and sharing thousands of photos of your destination. It's a growing collection of visual content that, with the right tools, you can tap into.

Featuring these images is a fantastic way to keep your visuals fresh and current, and highlight your best attractions.

Show real-time information

Embed live webcams or Instagram photos (both yours and those taken by visitors and locals) so that people can see photos of your destination in real time as they're being shared.

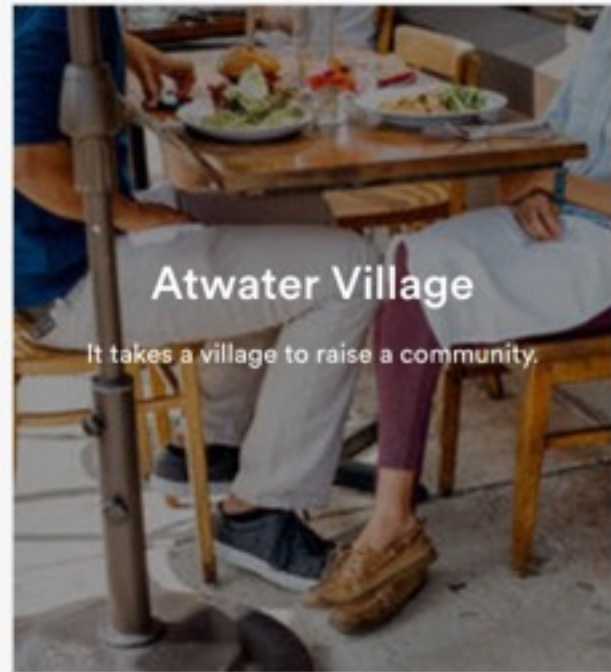
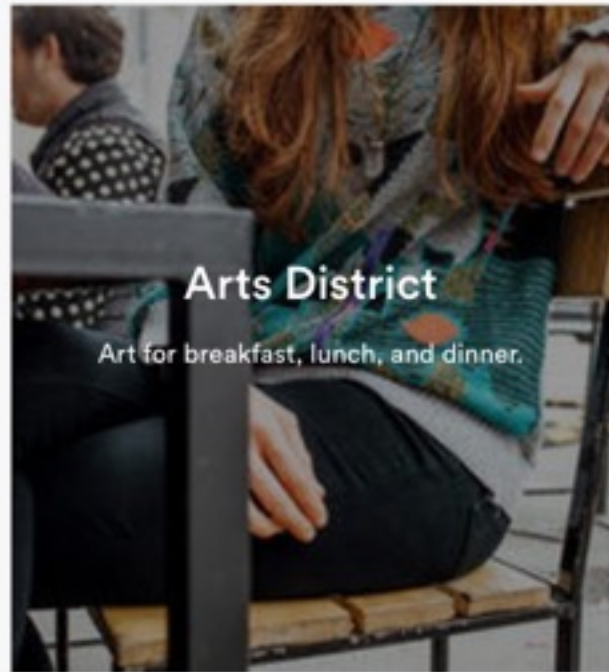
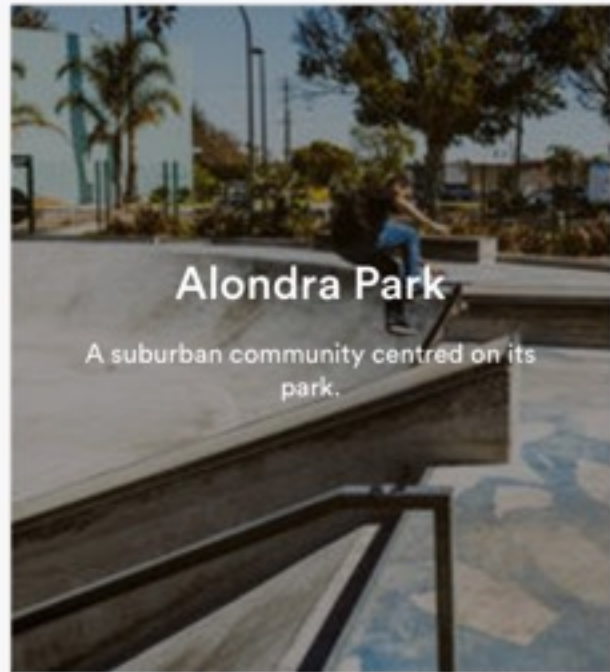
Visit Telluride's website has multiple live feeds for visitors to get an unfiltered view of their destination.

So while you can say that your destination has temperatures in the 60's in November, website visitors will appreciate seeing recent photos so they can see firsthand what people are actually wearing.

This "behind-the-scenes" look at your destination is something that will keep an interested tourist coming back to your site to find.



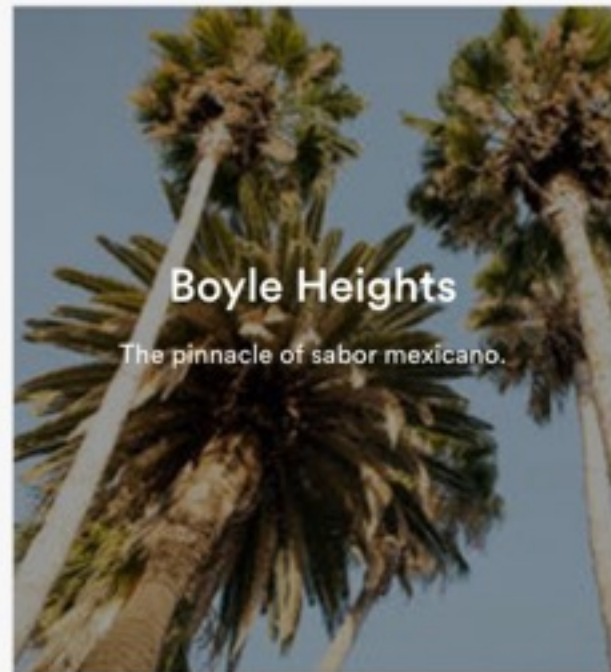
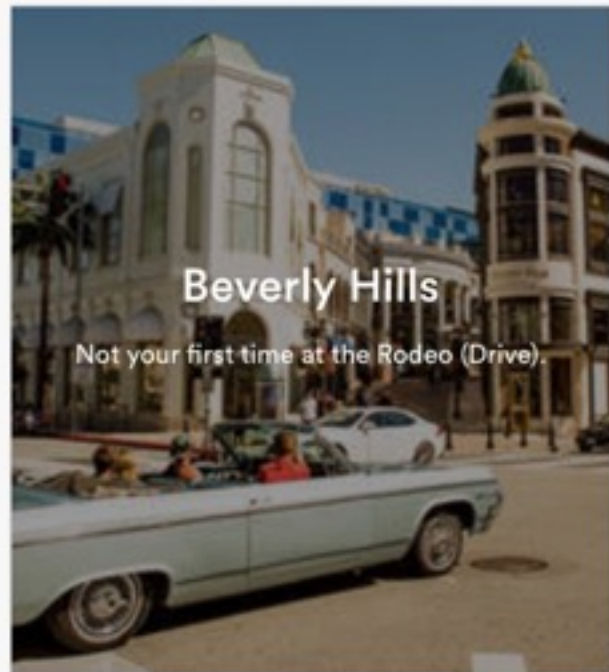
60 neighbourhoods. [See all listings](#)



Diverse • El Camino Village • Community College • Park

Industrial Buildings • Graffiti • Lofts • Sci-Arc

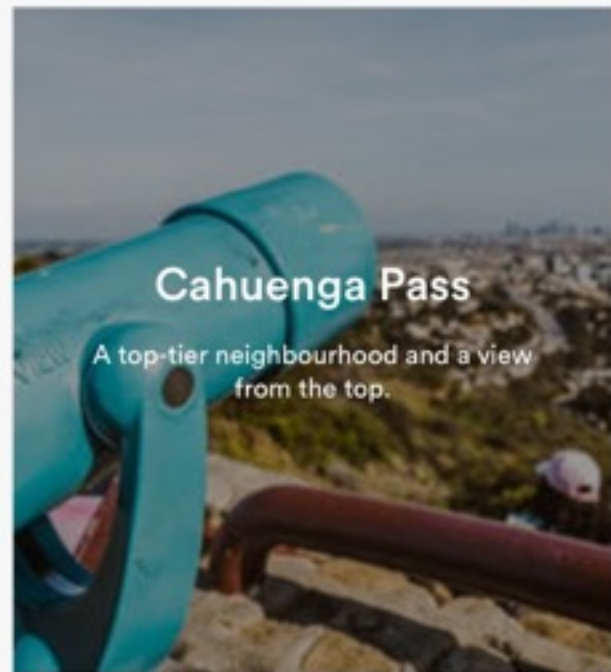
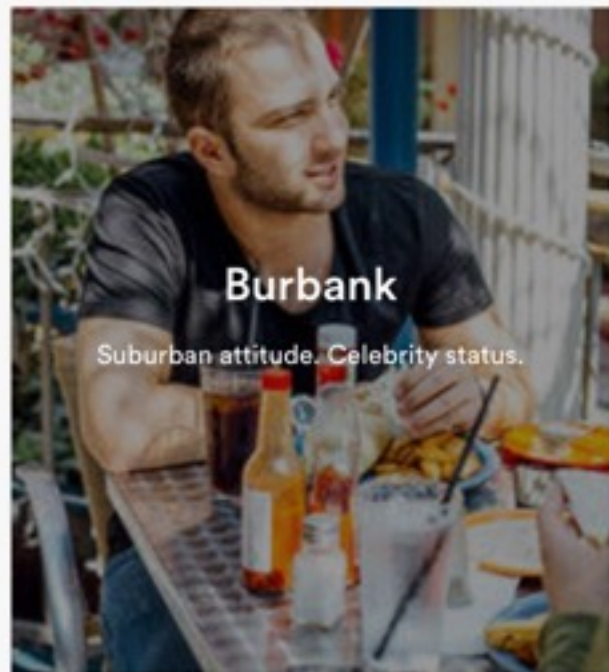
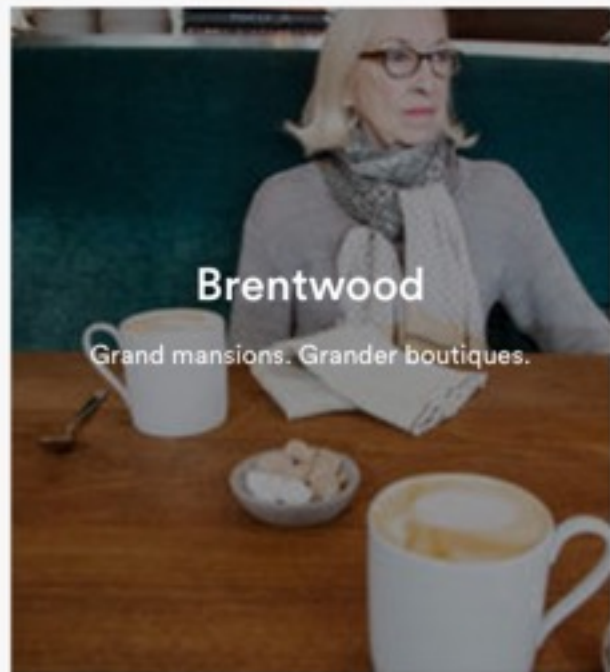
Community Events • Diverse • Midcentury • Farmers Markets



90210 • Mansions • Fresh Prince • Franklin Canyon Park

Wealthy • Celebrities • Rodeo Drive • Mansions

Cool Murals • Latino • Multi-Cultural • Mariachis



Arnold • Getty Centre • Celebrities • Whole Foods

Studios • Suburban • Big Chains • Equestrian Centre

Residential • Good Views • Cahuenga Park • Universal Studios

Serve niche interests

Give people a reason to use your site by creating pages and blog posts around niche travel interests.

Invite local influencers with particular specialties (like cocktails, artisan burgers, music, etc.) to do guest posts.

Offer neighborhood guides, like [Airbnb](#), and give a more “insider’s” take on showing the lesser-known spots!

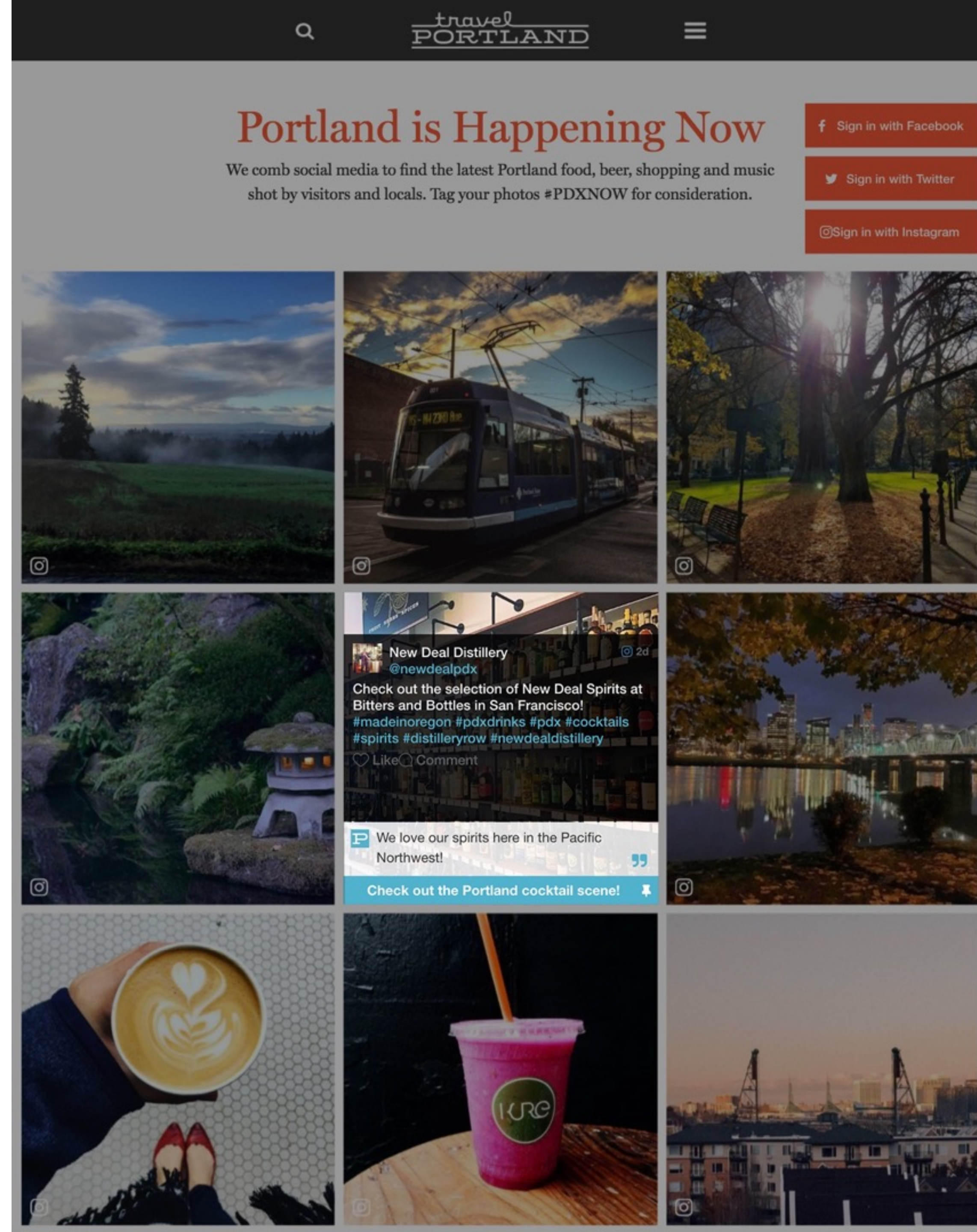
Connect visual inspiration with action

Being a visual influencer is about inspiring people through visuals, and then providing the actionable next step.

That means not only providing the images that will showcase your best sights, food, and attractions, but adding links nearby to direct interested people somewhere they can find more information (or book their tickets!).

Offering this seamless online experience will make your local businesses happy and give your website visitors a reason to return.

So don't leave people hanging — give actionable inspiration!



Summary



It's time to stand out as the authority for your destination, starting with your website.

There might be multiple areas of your website you can start to think about modernizing -- but don't be overwhelmed! Start with one or two changes that make the most sense for you, and steadily work your way through a larger website refresh. Implementing these solutions will deliver measurable results. Typical results of the DMOs we work with:

30%


Reduction in
bounce rate

4x

Increase
time on site

20%

Click-through to
tourism partners



Want a sneak peek?

CrowdRiff's visual marketing platform is used by over 130 DMOs to source and publish the best visuals to any marketing channel including websites, digital ads and social media. Use fewer words and more visuals to engage modern, social-savvy travelers.

We'd love to help bring your website to life — request a preview of the great visuals waiting for you!

[Request Your Preview](#)

