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Development

Nebraska slogan now a fashion item

Nebraska might not be for everyone, but merchandise sporting the state's new self-deprecating tourism slogan is. T-shirts and mugs featuring the slogan — "Nebraska. Honestly, it's not for everyone" — are on sale now through the Nebraska Tourism Commission.

"Since the moment we announced the campaign back in October we've been receiving requests left and right to buy T-shirts and mugs," John Ricks, executive director of the Nebraska Tourism Commission, said in a release.

The shirts come in two styles — a gray T-shirt, and a gray and red baseball raglan.

In the first 24 hours, Ricks estimated they sold about 100 T-shirts, 50 raglans and 50 mugs.

Money generated by sales of the shirts and mugs goes back to the Nebraska Tourism Commission, Ricks said. It will be reinvested into the organization's marketing program.

Source: Omaha.com



abcactionnews.com

Social media "influencer" Ann Tran visited Pasco County, Florida, to help promote the area for its DMO, Experience Florida's Gold Coast.

Social media influencers can be part of a comprehensive marketing strategy

Formulating an advertising strategy requires DMOs to know where potential travelers are looking for inspiration.

Their marketing options used to consist of broadcast TV and radio commercials, print ads in magazines and newspapers, and billboards.

The Internet has caused an explosion of tourism resources, including the aptly named "travel influencer."

"These intrepid wayfarers started out posting gorgeous images from popular or remote destinations to the Internet, particularly Instagram, attracting legions of fans who wanted to follow in their jet streams," is how a recent story in The Washington Post described them.

Many influencers started out as amateurs posting about their own travels, and within a few years some were able to earn a living selling their

services — or influence — to DMOs.

The crowded field leads to increased competition for views, which hopefully does not encourage embellishment or risky behavior.

Growth has happened so fast (an estimated two-thirds of marketers planned to raise their influencer spending in 2019) that speculation has emerged that the trend has already peaked. Other experts say the rise continues.

For DMOs considering using an influencer, here are some things to explore.

Accuracy matters

Beautiful scenes attract attention, but travelers should not be disappointed when they view it IRL because of photo enhancements by the influencer.

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Influencers can be an effective part of comprehensive marketing strategy

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Transparency

If a DMO is paying for an influencer's posts, this should be disclosed, according to Federal Trade Commission rules.

Influencers should use hashtags such as #ad or #sponsored to indicate that it is a paid service.

Research any influencer being considered for hire, including a thorough search of past posts. Old posts deemed inappropriate have caused the fall of a few YouTube stars.

Safety

Dangerous selfies should be avoided. There have been a number of reports in the news about the deaths of

people due to falls from selfie spots, so such behavior should be discouraged.

Sustainability

Many destinations are promoting their commitment to sustainable tourism, and influencers should follow their lead. Younger people tend toward eco-friendly views, and are also the predominant audience on social media, especially Instagram.

Over-tourism

There are many examples of tourists overrunning the latest "hot" destination. Be more creative by working with the influencers to encourage them to promote off-the-beaten-path attractions.

Pay estimates

How much can an influencer earn? They declined to tell The Washington Post for its recent article. The newspaper cited Mediakix, which estimated influencers can earn from \$10 to \$80 per 1,000 Instagram followers. They also could receive a free trip, lodging and other comps. An AdWeek report estimated the overall influencer market will be worth \$10 billion by 2020.

And, of course, the use of an influencer should be just one part of a well-realized comprehensive marketing strategy.

Sources: washingtonpost.com, adweek.com, hunterpr.com, abcactionnews.com, odwyerpr.com.

Social media 'rescues' Indonesian village

Social media can destroy tourist attractions. But sometimes Instagram's power can be used for good. It can even save a village.

Fifteen years ago, the small Indonesian village of Ponggok could barely sustain itself. According to the South China Morning Post, residents lacked money and education, unemployment was high and those who were lucky to have jobs earned income on farms or in quarries.

Today, the village is one of the most prosperous in the country, enjoying riches of almost \$1 million per year.

What changed? In abstract terms, the gift of vanity, and social media's ability to broadcast it. More concretely, the town added an

attraction: A gorgeous pond named Umbul Pongokk with scores of colorful fish plus submerged couches, televisions and motorcycles.

For an entrance fee of just \$1, snap-happy visitors sink themselves into these scenarios for photo sessions, with underwater cameras, props and snorkeling equipment available for rental if needed for about \$5.

The brilliant plan that helped revitalize an economy was devised in 2006 by then-newly elected village head Junaedi Mulyono. Mulyono noticed that though moss-covered, the nearby pond that villagers used to bathe and wash their clothes was flowing with the water from 40 natural springs. He convinced over



@Christantopaulkoy/Instagram

half the village's 700 families to invest in a business centered on the pond.

Unemployment was virtually eliminated via the stalls erected around the tourist attraction that sell souvenirs, clothing and food, and today the villagers own nearly 40 percent of the shares in the attraction; the rest are owned by the government.

Source: nypost.com