

TRAVELTRENDS™

Monthly travel insights from Compete

By Gregory Saks

Consumer Generated Content: Learning from Travel Innovators

When making travel decisions consumers listen to one another. In total, consumer generated content (CGC) already influences \$10 billion a year in online travel bookings. Consumers are increasingly embracing their peers' voices online: 20% rely on CGC when planning travel, and they consider this content more credible than reviews from professionals or information from the brands themselves.

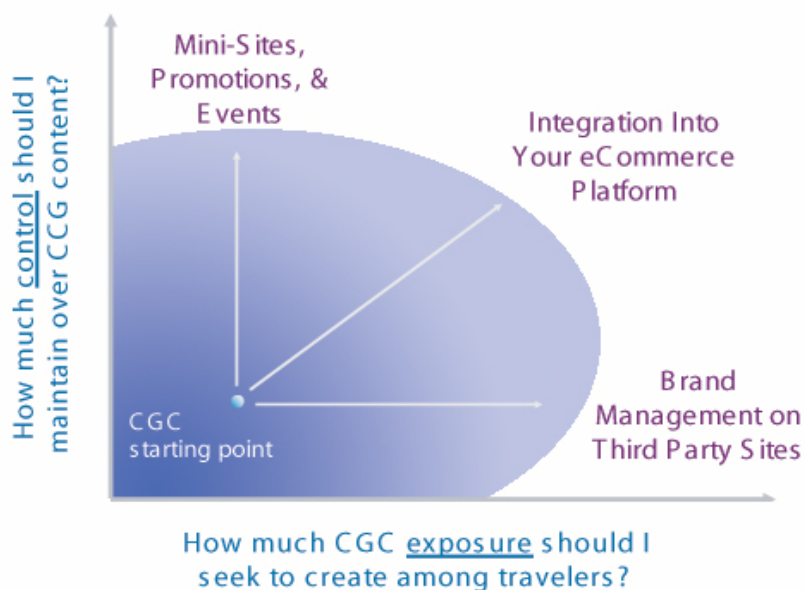
To understand how marketers can create a strategy for getting involved in the conversation, Compete analyzed the effectiveness of three innovators in the travel category that have already embraced CGC:

- **Sheraton Hotels** pushed its standard website booking functionality aside, transforming into a social platform revolving around a "Global Neighborhood"
- **Southwest Airlines** launched a promotion to involve consumers in its marketing campaign through a contest for creating the best "Wanna Get Away" commercial
- **TripAdvisor** has become the single largest source of consumer-generated travel reviews online, with over 5 million consumers sharing in an ongoing dialogue.

Key Findings:

- In many situations, consumers will *welcome* brands to participate in the conversation
- CGC can have a direct and positive impact on eCommerce performance
- Brand advocates are hard to come by, but have a significant ability to shape the effectiveness of CGC campaigns

Balancing Control and Exposure: Three Potential CGC Strategies



As CGC in travel matures, marketers are asking two questions when considering CGC initiatives: How much control should I seek to maintain over the conversation, and how much exposure among travelers is appropriate? These initial questions will help define the direction of CGC campaigns, but the real question is: how can these strategies be executed successfully?

In a FREE web presentation taking place on Monday, April 16th at 2:00 Eastern, Compete will present a comprehensive report on Consumer Generated Travel Content.

To register, visit www.competeinc.com/TDR

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Compete's Travel practice researches the entire online consideration and booking process for consumers, offering an unmatched level of insight into how travelers engage, cross-shop, and convert across all agency and supplier destinations.

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