THE TRAVEL LANDSCAPE

$2 trillion contribution to the world economy annually

Travel spend in Europe is on the rise: Germany, the Nordics and the UK lead the way

People are taking fewer, more expensive vacations

So how do you reach people to ensure you play a role in these high-value bookings?
We suspected that there is an opportunity to reach consumers on Facebook throughout the cycle.
SO WE DID SOME RESEARCH...

OBJECTIVE

To understand the travel cycle and the importance of Facebook for the travel industry

WHAT WE DID TO INVESTIGATE THIS

Qualitative

Two markets: UK & Germany
2 week online diaries
16 heavy Facebook users who were in the process of booking or travelling on a vacation during the research period
8 follow up in-depth interviews

Quantitative

Three markets: UK, Germany, Nordics
Online survey of Facebook users (n=3018)
Logging on at least once a month
Who have been on vacation in the last 12 months
WE TURNED OUR FOCUS TO FACEBOOK SUPER USERS

“The amount of stuff you shared today is double the amount of stuff you shared a year ago and the stuff that you will share a year from now will be double the amount you’ve shared today.”

Zuck’s Law of Social Sharing

The top 20% of today’s users are an indication of where the mainstream is heading next. We focussed on this group, so you as marketers can stay ahead of the curve.
TRAVEL IS THE BIGGEST VERTICAL ON FACEBOOK

51%

put ‘vacations’ as one of the top three post types they see on Facebook – above nights out, music, food, pets, babies, weddings
(Total sample=33%)

42%

of stories shared to users’ Facebook timelines are travel experiences, more than double that of the next category
Source: Facebook Internal Data

The figures cited in brackets refer to total sample (n=3018)
FACEBOOK VASTLY INCREASES PEOPLE’S EXPOSURE TO VACATIONS

With an average of 150 Facebook friends per user, there is always an opportunity to engage in other travel cycles.

“When you’ve got hundreds of friends on Facebook, someone’s always going to be uploading photos from somewhere in the world, so if you’re checking Facebook a few times a day and you’re seeing all these photos pop up, that instantly makes you think of wanting to go there.” (UK)

Facebook Internal data: Average of countries researched (UK/GER/Nordics)
IN FACT, FACEBOOK IS NOW THE MAIN WAY TO FIND OUT ABOUT FRIENDS’ AND FAMILY’S VACATIONS

Friends and family influence travel - much of this social contact has moved online

84% agree their friends’ and family’s vacations inspire them (Total sample=70%)

64% agree that without Facebook they wouldn’t know where their friends had been on vacation (Total sample=44%)

“Listening to friends’ and family’s recommendations has the same importance as ever, but social networks are the new medium through which the information reaches you.” (UK)
LET’S LOOK AT FACEBOOK’S ROLE AT EACH STAGE OF THE CYCLE
DREAMING: FACEBOOK FUELS DISCUSSION AND DISCOVERY
CONTINUOUS, REAL-TIME EXPOSURE TO VACATION EXPERIENCES CAN SPARK A TRAVEL DREAM AT ANY MOMENT

83% agree they enjoy looking at photos of friends’ and family’s vacations, even when they’re not considering going away (Total sample=73%)

52% say when using Facebook they’d started dreaming about a vacation even when they didn’t have one on the horizon (Total sample=23%)

“It takes you away from the grind of life here and puts you in a space which is completely different, and in that moment you’re taken away to a place where they are and it can just be a very warm and nice feeling.” (UK)
FACEBOOK MAKES EVEN THE MOST ASPIRATIONAL TRAVEL DREAMS FEEL MORE ACHIEVABLE

47% say when using Facebook they have scrolled through albums to find out more about a destination (Total sample=20%)

58% say friends’ and family’s experiences have encouraged them to visit a place they’ve never considered before (Total sample=40%)

70% agree they can more easily imagine going to a place if they’ve seen family or friends there, even if it’s far away (Total sample=55%)

“It shows you can actually get there – it’s not impossible to reach.” (UK)
PLANNING: FACEBOOK PROVIDES NECESSARY REASSURANCE PRIOR TO BOOKING
PLANNING IS ALL ABOUT BUILDING UP ENOUGH CONFIDENCE TO BOOK

74% agree they will only book when they’re confident they know exactly what they’re getting
(Total sample=75%)

And this confidence largely stems from personal recommendation

83% agree they feel more confident when friends and family recommend a vacation
(Total sample=76%)
FACEBOOK USERS GET THE REASSURANCE THEY NEED VIA ACTIVITY ON FACEBOOK

95% use Facebook for travel-related activities prior to going on vacation (Total sample=46%)

“I posted something about where you can go in Turkey, and now [my friends] have started answering. I tried to gather as much information as possible.” (Germany)

**Top Facebook Activities:**

- Seek social reassurance by looking at the profiles of friends who have been there before
- Make plans with friends and family they’re going away with
- Review pages relevant to the prospective trip
- Search for relevant material in the search tab
FACEBOOK HELPS TRAVEL BRANDS ADD PERSONALIZED RECOMMENDATIONS

85% agree that friends and family recommendations are tailored to them...
(Total sample=77%)

...compared with 74%
for TripAdvisor
(Total sample=63%)
BOOKING: FACEBOOK SURROUNDS THE MOMENT OF BOOKING
Almost everyone uses Facebook for travel-related activities before and after booking

95% use Facebook for vacation-related activities before booking  
(Total sample=46%)

94% use Facebook for vacation-related activities after booking  
(Total sample=45%)

E.g. post a status, contact those going with them, use the share link from the booking website...
FACEBOOK USERS WANT TO BROADCAST THEIR EXCITEMENT AT BOOKING
EXPERIENCE: FACEBOOK IS THERE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY
SWITCHING OFF FROM DAILY LIFE DOESN’T MEAN SWITCHING OFF FROM FACEBOOK WHILST ON HOLIDAY

97% of those who go online while abroad for information use Facebook (Total sample=78%)

91% of them use Facebook at least every couple of days while they’re on vacation (Total sample=61%)
THIS IS BECAUSE FACEBOOK IS...

- A direct connection to friends and family: 59%
- A personal diary: 28%
- Habitual: 44%
- Fun!: 42%
REFLECT: FACEBOOK IS WHERE THE VACATION LIVES ON AND STARTS ALL OVER AGAIN
LOGGING INTO FACEBOOK IS ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS PEOPLE DO WHEN GETTING HOME

99% do something on Facebook when they get back from a vacation (Total sample=66%)

32% of these users do so before they even get home from the airport (Total sample=21%)

to extend their feeling of vacation excitement
to show-off what they’ve been up to
to offer their own recommendations to others

“I suppose because I reach out to my friends to find out information about things I’m interested in, I think it’s my duty to do the same for my friends.” (UK)
UPLOADING MEMORIES FROM A VACATION FUELS THE TRAVEL CYCLE

inspiring the next dream
TRAVEL ON FACEBOOK IS NEAR & NOW