

Destination Marketing Guide

Insights to inspire, connect
and convert travelers



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Capture travelers' attention as tourism increases

Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) — large and small and across the globe — have more opportunities to reach more travelers as demand continues to increase.

According to our custom study with Wakefield, Traveler Value Index 2023, on traveler trends, nearly 8 in 10 consumers will take at least one leisure trip in the next 12 months, and more than half will take at least two leisure trips. When it comes to booking, 55% of travelers book less than a month in advance while nearly 60% book within two months of travel. And these travelers are pulling out their wallets: 43% say they plan on increasing their travel budget in the next year.

This is great news for DMOs, but the question is: Do you know how to capture this demand with today's travelers?



Traveler interests, influences and behaviors are continuously changing. DMOs that seek insights into traveler behavior are better positioned to connect with travelers who are actively searching to generate excitement about their destination and develop compelling campaigns to lift their destination above the competition.

Use data to your advantage. DMOs can't be expected to have all the data they need at their fingertips. Working with a partner that delivers tailored insights to target

the right travelers and getting accurate reporting helps you keep a pulse on how your campaign is performing.

Every destination is unique and has its own story to tell. Delivering immersive and intriguing campaigns to curious travelers searching for their next trip will help you attract more people to your destination.

Successful marketing campaigns can help increase your destination's economic value. From providing employment opportunities and generating more business revenue to helping fund public attractions through fees and local taxes, tourism is integral to sustaining a healthy economic base.

It's no secret that things have certainly changed in the travel industry. But these changes have also allowed us to gain a new perspective and provide DMOs with more creative, flexible and targeted marketing opportunities that are particularly useful as the industry continues to evolve, travelers look for destinations that offer the experiences they're seeking, and inclusivity and sustainability expand as a must-have travel preference.

To help you capitalize on these new opportunities and build a roadmap that will benefit your organization, we'll cover three pillars of destination marketing:

► **Understanding traveler values**

► **Inspiring travelers**

► **Connecting with travelers**



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Where else on earth can you see the sun rise in one location and watch the sun set in another in a single day? Tourism is incredibly important to the state of Florida – it's the No. 1 economic driver. Every day in my job I'm reminded that I live in the state where the world vacations and people dream about.

I think some of our biggest challenges are reaching the right person, in the right moment, at the right time, with the right message. VISIT FLORIDA does a lot of innovative work, but it's only possible because it's powered by partners like Expedia.

Staci Mellman,

Chief Marketing Officer,
VISIT FLORIDA

Understand what travelers want

When travelers win, we all win. Traveler behaviors, motivations and influences can vary by geography, generation, and personal preference. And these are often shifting, especially when there are also constant industry challenges at play. It can be hard to keep up, which is why we tap into the power of the Expedia Group platform for our partners.



Hundreds of millions of people from around the world use our 200+ travel websites every month for inspiration, researching and booking. This encompasses accommodations, flights, car rentals, activities, and more. This interaction with our sites also provides more than 70 petabytes of first-party data across our platform.

The value of this data is important for your marketing efforts because it provides a deeper understanding of traveler intent and demand and includes where, when and how travelers are looking and booking. Any destination — from small cities to country-level DMOs — can glean insights from this data to know things like what other destinations travelers are searching for, what types of travelers are searching and booking their destination, changes in booking windows, and other data points to help shape your strategy on and off Expedia Group sites.

Beyond the specific market data DMOs can access, global and regional insights are available in our quarterly [Traveler Insights Reports](#), which provide key learnings about the latest travel trends. The report encompasses search volumes and search windows, top-booked destinations, lodging performance and more.

We also conduct custom third-party research to more broadly understand traveler sentiment and preferences to get to the why behind their travel decisions. The research focuses on traveler motivations and mindsets — what's important to them, how their preferences are changing, and how they feel about emerging trends like [sustainable](#) and [inclusive travel](#) (spoiler alert: they care a lot).

We closely monitor impacts to the industry to best understand what it might mean for destination marketers and other travel brands. This intelligence is key to answering important questions destination marketers need answered, such as when to spend your budget, who to reach and where to invest. It can also inform the messaging, imagery and tone of your advertising campaign to resonate better with travelers.



Inspire travelers

Once you understand what your target traveler wants, you can begin telling the story of your destination in a way that inspires them to choose your destination.

As people spend more time online and have the world at their fingertips, it's crucial for DMOs to differentiate themselves. Travel lends itself to exploring different environments, cultures and people. But if travelers can't find anything about your destination that's intriguing to them, they'll look elsewhere.

That's why it's imperative to deliver a unique view into the experiences your destination offers to set it apart from others. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is by helping travelers immerse themselves in destinations prior to booking with innovative, creative advertising solutions.



Custom creative campaigns

Partnering with our award-winning

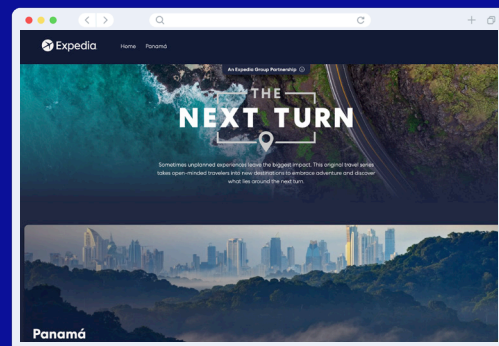
in-house team of creative experts can help you deliver a bespoke media experience that includes video content, interactive digital platforms, experiential campaigns, and more to inspire travelers across our global brands.

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We're excited about the opportunity to work together on a campaign that allows discerning travelers to fully immerse themselves in the adventure and cultural experiences widely available throughout Panamá.

Woodrow Oldford,
CMO, Visit Panamá

Campaign spotlight



Visit Panamá promoted the country with an immersive video series, “[The Next Turn](#).” The original content showcases the destination’s epic experiences and its support for sustainability and inclusion.

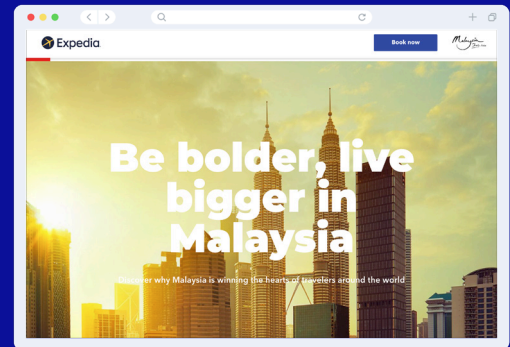
The series follows visitors as they immerse themselves in the culture, history and adventure of Panamá, inviting travelers to experience what visiting is like before they book. The immersive videos also create a bridge between inspiration and action, giving travelers an easy way to plan and book the experiences they’re seeing without leaving the page.

Engaging content

Our creative and engaging [Travel Spotlights](#) deliver simple, elegant and impactful premium landing pages with vibrant imagery designed to encourage deeper exploration. Choose from a suggested itinerary with key experiences, a co-branded article that tells your destination's unique story, an intriguing editorial listicle, interactive quiz, video gallery, and more.



Campaign spotlight



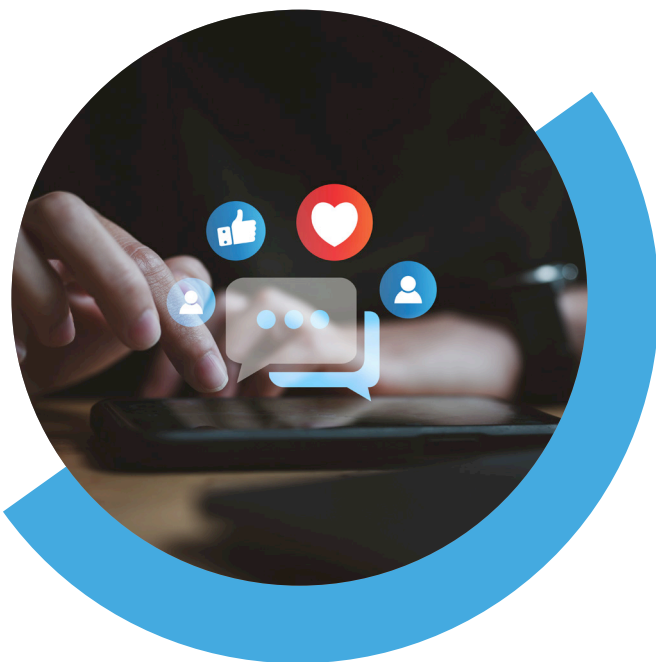
[Tourism Malaysia](#) opted for a Travel Spotlight and partnered with us to inspire and convert international travelers as borders reopened in the region. The DMO wanted to remind travelers of Malaysia's many hidden and unique attractions and promote the country's rich and diverse culture.

With a Travel Spotlight, DMOs can appeal to a broad range of traveler interests, telling stories the way they want them to be told. In this case, Tourism Malaysia's listicle highlights that whether you're a sun-seeker, foodie, adventurer or night owl, there's something for everyone.

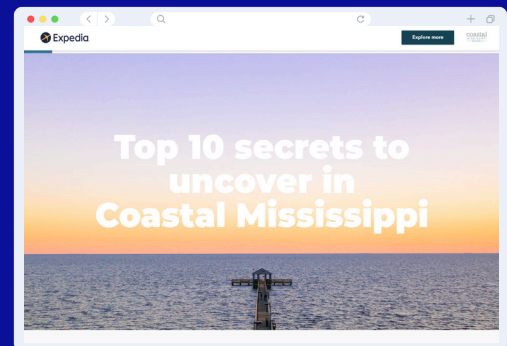
Social media

Data doesn't lie: Social media is an effective way to reach travelers. Social media now influences more traveler's plans than traditional outlets such as print and television. It's also the No. 1 influential source of travel inspiration for Generation Z and the second most important influencer for millennials.

According to [TravelMedia](#), 87% of millennial travelers use social media as the initial place to go for travel inspiration. We also know that [52% of users](#) said they made plans to visit a specific destination based on social media content they saw. And [GWI's](#) 2022 social media



Campaign spotlight



To help the region recover in an increasingly competitive market, [Coastal Mississippi](#) partnered with Media Solutions to deliver a bespoke campaign presenting the Mississippi Gulf Coast as a leading leisure travel and premier business event destination.

The campaign included a co-branded video that was viewed over 230,000 times on social media and drove shoppers to a custom landing page filled with rich content highlighting the area's hidden gems. By the close of the campaign, the region increased its share of search and room nights against its competitive set, converting at a significantly better rate than before the campaign.

report shows that while social media consumption has plateaued since the peak of the pandemic, the daily average time spent globally on social networks was still 2 hours and 26 minutes in 2021.

As a destination marketer, leveraging the power of social media is key. And why not also leverage loyal Expedia and Vrbo communities? With people spending so much time on social media, custom social media solutions can help you successfully connect with highly engaged travelers across our social channels.

A social integration package can help you transform standard ads into a native social experience across social feeds. For example, you can use Instagram stories to drive engagement, showcase your destination with a co-branded video or use custom social promotions for different assets and channels.



Connect with travelers

Once you understand what travel shoppers want and how to inspire them to visit, you need to connect with the right travelers at the right time. With dynamic solutions to help DMOs and other travel marketers there's an array of options, including native advertising, standard display ads, audience extension, co-op campaigns, and more.

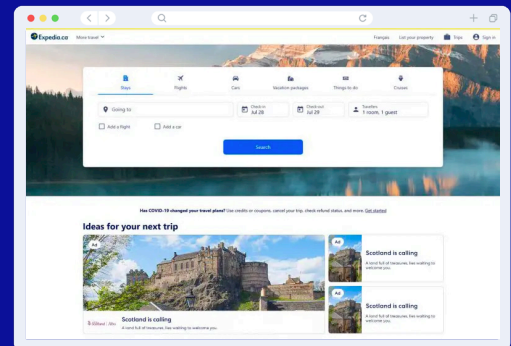


Native advertising

Native advertising lets DMOs showcase their brand with contextually relevant, non-disruptive ads that are seamlessly integrated across our sites. Because [native ads](#) are woven into the traveler's journey, they can yield better results. This includes our Destination Experience Gallery ads, a highly visual and engaging format that provides travelers with more information about a destination they're researching or inspires them to investigate alternative destinations. These experiential ads allow DMOs to showcase multiple features and images with a single placement.



Campaign spotlight



As travel — domestic and international — returns to near pre-pandemic levels, [VisitScotland](#) was eager to re-engage with potential visitors by increasing the destination's visibility and converting travel shoppers who had previously researched Scotland as a travel destination.

By using our native advertising solution to get in front of travelers that were interested in visiting Scotland, the campaign drove above-average CTR and an impactful 80:1 return on ad spend. The success of this tourism marketing campaign helped raise the visibility of VisitScotland with our highly qualified travelers and actively drove conversions and bookings to Scotland.

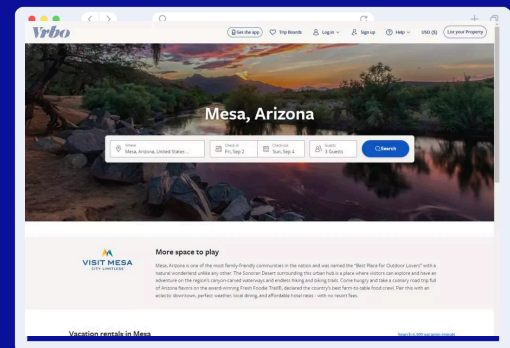
Display advertising

Display advertising, like native advertising, increases visibility for your destination but uses standard website placement. You can choose from a range of sizes and placements designed for any stage of the traveler's shopping journey and present them across Expedia's 200+ sites, in emails or on mobile.

Our data shows that DMOs that work with us can drive twice the amount of engagement when compared with other publishers. In 2022, DMOs experienced a click-through rate (CTR) of 0.1% where the industry standard is 0.06%. With display advertising, you get a direct connection for your destination with highly engaged travelers.



Campaign spotlight



Since the early days of the pandemic, there's been a growing rise in car travel that hasn't waned. [Visit Mesa](#) wanted to target this road-trip audience by leveraging the brand recognition of Vrbo, part of Expedia Group. The DMO used display ads that led to a promotional Vrbo landing page touting the destination's offerings.

With this strategy, Visit Mesa met travelers where they were and led them down a path to conversion. In a few months the campaign generated more than 42 million impressions, a CTR of 0.20%, and a return on ad spend (ROAS) of nearly 50:1. What's more, the average length of stay booked from this campaign was a whopping 8.5 nights.



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The change in the accommodations world has been constant. Visit Mesa has seen notable growth in the [short-term rental] market, and we needed to review our options to reach as many visitors as possible through advertising.

What Visit Mesa was looking for was a partner that would be able to assist us in evaluating our short-term rental business. Working with Vrbo has enabled us to set a baseline based on our campaigns and the funds associated with those campaigns. Our return on investment has completely exceeded our expectations.

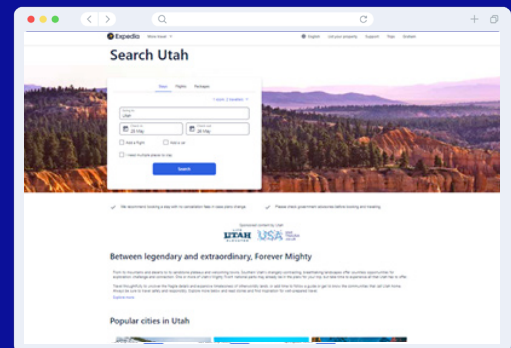
Kimberly Forest,
Senior Vice President,
Visitor Marketing

PassportAds Audience Extension

Recent data from our Traveler Insights Report showed that with the surge in travel intent, there's an opportunity for destination marketers to connect with travelers at multiple points as they research and plan a trip.

Unlike native or display ads, which engage shoppers on our Expedia Group sites, our audience extension solution [PassportAds](#) connects you to shoppers even when they're not actively browsing an Expedia travel site. Leveraging our anonymous, first-party search and booking data, we find lookalike audiences to allow you to target specific audience segments wherever they're browsing online — even while they're reading the news or checking the weather.

Campaign spotlight



The state of Utah in the U.S. is famed for its contrasting and breathtaking landscapes, but when COVID-19 closed most borders, the [Utah Office of Tourism](#) needed to ensure it stayed top of mind with international travelers.

Knowing of the rise in digital media consumption, the DMO partnered with us to target travel shoppers in Australia, the U.K. and Germany, so that, when restrictions lifted, they would choose to visit Utah. Thanks to PassportAds, the destination drove impressive results, delivering 55 million impressions and an average click-through rate of 0.12%.



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Working with Expedia Group Media Solutions helped us stay top of mind, inspire future travel in our international markets, and lead innovatively when our competitors were silent. We chose to lead among our competitors by targeting potential future visitors to discover and book their next trip to Utah's unrivaled burgeoning urban cityscapes, national parks, state parks and national monuments.

Rachel Bremer,

Global Markets Director, Utah

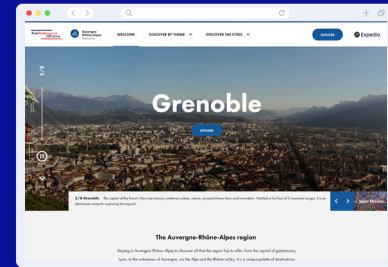
Office of Tourism

Co-Op campaigns

We know that budgets might still be tight during this time of rebuilding and renewal, which is why a [Co-Op campaign](#) might be the solution you need to connect with travelers. A Co-Op campaign allows complementary brands to come together in a collective advertising effort that amplifies their marketing spend.



Campaign spotlight



When international travel was restricted, [Atout France](#), [Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Tourism](#), and seven [local DMOs](#) looked for opportunities to promote domestic travel outside tourist-heavy Paris. They opted for a Co-Op campaign, which helped them unite their efforts — and funds — toward a common marketing goal. They wanted to highlight the diversity of the region, as well as the unique culture and offerings of each of the featured cities.

By the end of the campaign there was a 25% growth rate for hotel stays and over 70% growth for vacation rentals year over year. It also generated an impressive 334 million impressions and more than 441,000 clicks. And the campaign's Instagram activity increased average engagement on Expedia Group landing pages by over 200%.

Working with us helped the DMOs deliver a timely campaign that boosted awareness of one of the country's lesser-known markets.

The result: **Convert travelers**

By understanding what travelers want and inspiring them with compelling campaigns and connecting with them on the right channels, you will be that much closer to driving travelers to book *your destination*.



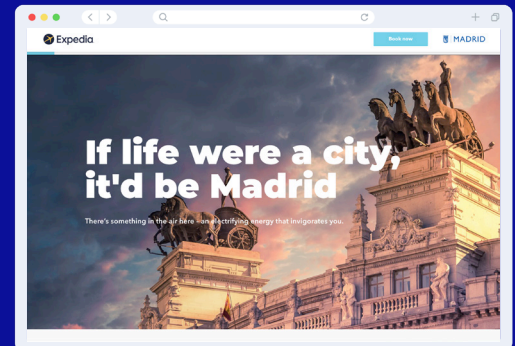
Targeting

As demonstrated in many of the campaign spotlights, [targeting](#) is crucial for destination marketing.

With access to over 70 petabytes of exclusive first-party traveler intent and booking data from Expedia Group travelers, this expansive set of data allows us to help you build custom audience segments to target travelers based on how they searched. Do you want to target travelers searching for or traveling from specific destinations? Do you want to reach luxury travelers or ski



Campaign spotlight



The [City of Madrid Tourism Council](#) used targeting to reach its desired travelers. In the Expedia Group 2022 Travel Trends Report, 68% of 12,000 survey respondents said they're planning to go big on their next trip and 40% said they're willing to splurge.

This comes as no surprise, since travelers are eager to make up for lost time. That's why when borders started to reopen around the world, the City of Madrid Tourism Council saw the opportunity to target luxury travelers in Mexico, the U.K. and U.S.

During the campaign's run, we saw these three countries among the top five countries searching for Madrid — and nearly 70% of those travel shoppers booked stays in luxury hotels.

enthusiasts? Families with children?

All of this is possible and more, with our custom targeting capabilities.

With the ability to look at everything from historical search and booking data to specific consumer touch points, and the capability to segment audiences along multiple parameters, we'll help you identify your target audience and drive travelers to book at your destination. And because all our targeting is based on Expedia Group first-party data, you can feel confident in reaching active travelers in the right way.



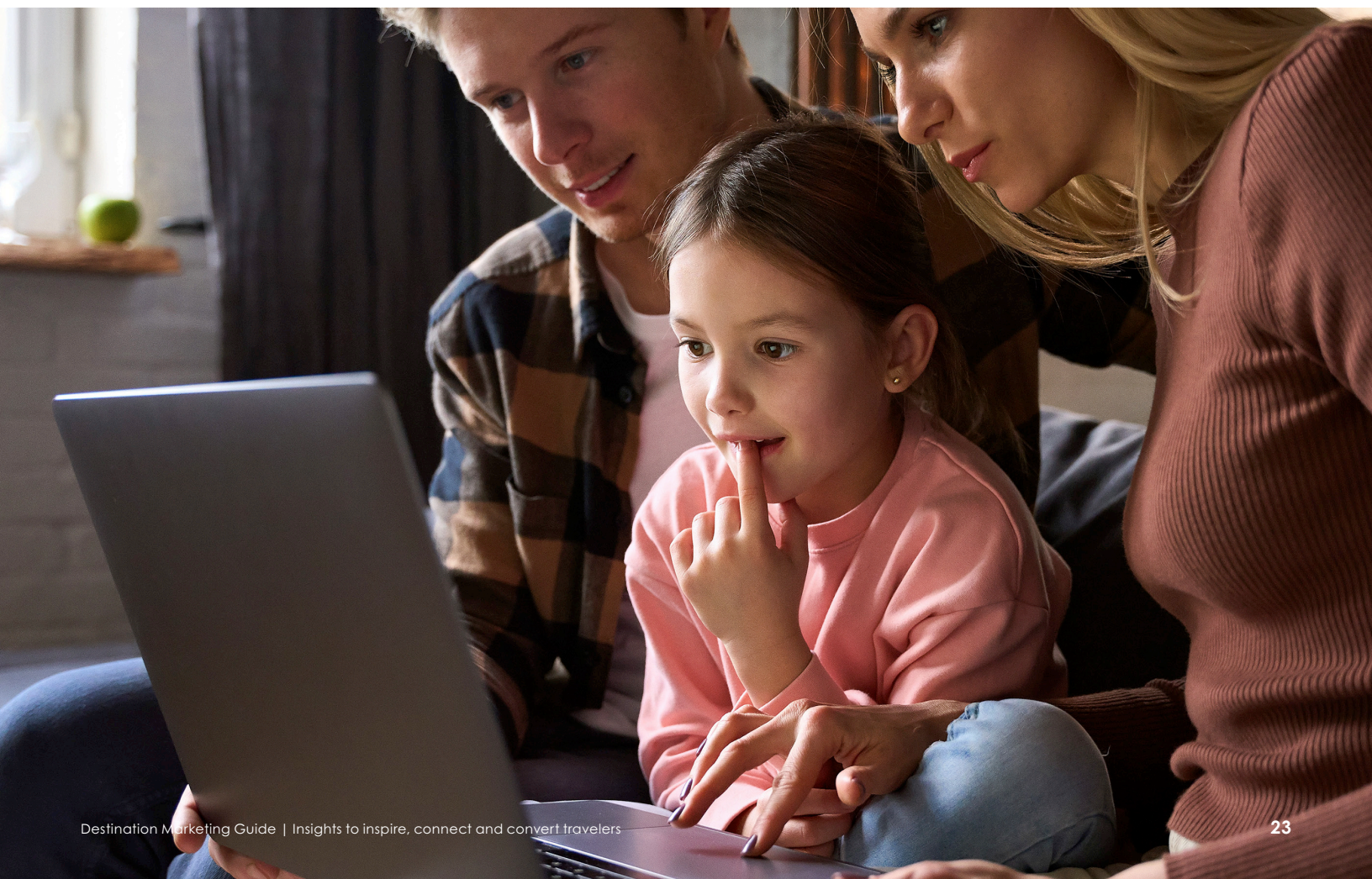
70+
petabytes

of exclusive first-party
traveler intent and
booking data helps you
target the right traveler

Why Expedia Group Media Solutions

We understand the power of innovative, meaningful and strategic advertising. For instance, in early 2022 we launched two highly successful TV spots that dominated social media and industry coverage in the days leading up to the Super Bowl.

There was “[Stuff: Made to Travel](#),” starring Ewan McGregor, that served to remind us it’s experiences that matter the most in life, and a [Vrbo spot](#) showcasing how a vacation rental can bring loved ones together. Both TV spots generated significant demand across our brands. When Expedia Group spends marketing dollars to bring travelers to our sites to be inspired, to search and book travel, all our partners benefit.



Data and insights to understand economic value

When you partner with us, you have access to unparalleled reporting. By combining the insights of first-party data and industry-leading custom research, our team of travel analysts and experts will work with you on pre-campaign planning, support you throughout the campaign with real-time analytics, and help you optimize for superior results.

These insights let you examine how your campaigns drove and contributed to your destination's economic value and provide you with the data you need to share with your stakeholders. At the end of the campaign, you'll gain a deeper understanding of your campaign's performance with actionable insights to uncover new strategies for future marketing efforts.

Gain visibility on hundreds of sites

Capture travel demand with our full suite of advertising solutions that can connect



you with hundreds of millions of travelers across Expedia brands. This includes Expedia, Vrbo, Hotels.com, and others, totaling hundreds of branded sites in 75 countries, localized in 35 languages and with loyal customer bases.

Power your DMO with Open World

The latest innovation is Expedia Group Open World, a purpose-built platform that empowers DMOs and other partners to leverage and configure products and services in the way they need.

For example, as a destination marketing organization, you could let a traveler book an activity through your website



with the help of our tools. By helping everyone take advantage of our technology and supply, Open World will make it possible for DMOs to thrive with a suite of solutions tailored to their needs, all powered by our immense artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities.

Build relationships with loyal customers

Open World is one way we're evolving our business toward customer-oriented, traveler-first experiences. Innovations like these build long-lasting relationships and lifetime customers — and when you work with us, you benefit too.

Over 20 years, more than 2,000 DMOs globally have partnered with us — [contact our team](#) of experts and let us help you tell your destination's story.



Expedia Group Media Solutions is a global travel advertising platform that connects marketers with hundreds of millions of travelers across the Expedia Group brands. With our exclusive access to more than 70 petabytes of Expedia Group traveler search and booking data, we offer advertisers actionable insights, sophisticated targeting, and full-funnel results reporting. Our suite of solutions includes display, sponsored listings, audience extension, Co-Op campaigns, and custom creative campaigns – all designed for our branded sites globally to add value to our travel shoppers and deliver on the objectives of our advertising partners. We bring more than 20 years of travel and media experience to help our advertising partners inspire, engage, and convert travelers for meaningful results.

For more information, visit www.advertising.expedia.com.