



HEBSTREATEGY EDITION:
**CONTENT MARKETING
THROUGH THE FUNNEL**

Utilizing current trends to
reach different audiences with
customized content

CONTENTS

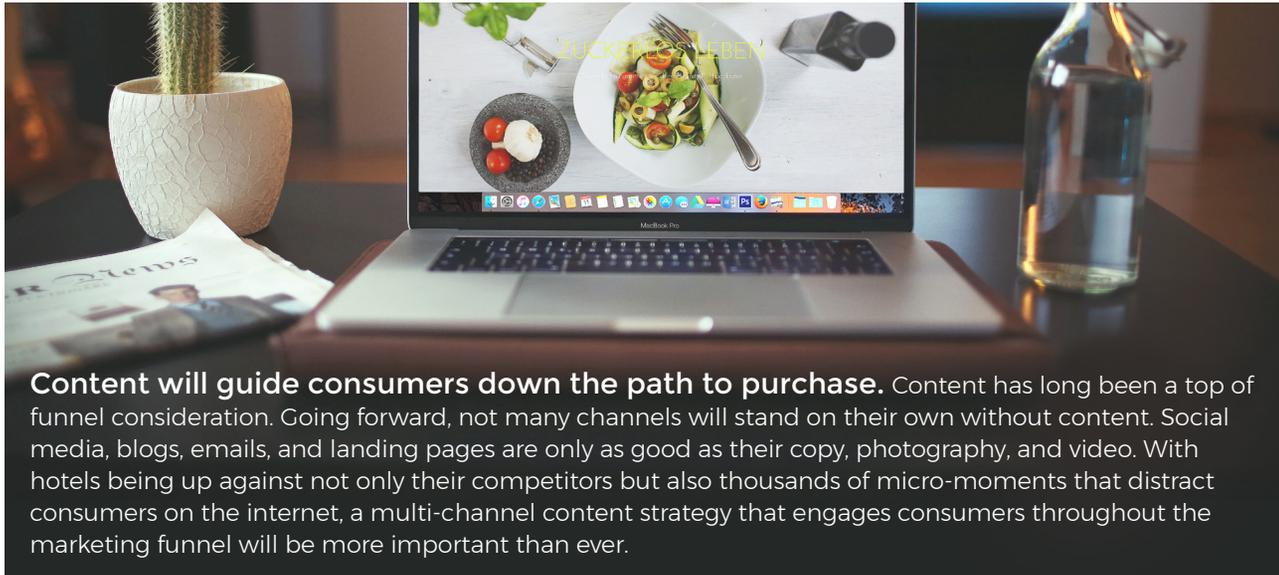
Q1 2018

Hotel brands should be looking for the most **creative ways of conveying their messages** and telling their stories. Whether it's through visually compelling images or social media and blogs, it's increasingly important to **seek fresh ways** to effectively engage with desired target audiences – through content marketing.



TRENDING | WHAT'S NEXT

Understanding what's trending will help you focus on what to do right now. Here, we highlight the most important insights coming out of the hospitality industry, and how these trends should be shaping your strategy in 2018.



Content will guide consumers down the path to purchase. Content has long been a top of funnel consideration. Going forward, not many channels will stand on their own without content. Social media, blogs, emails, and landing pages are only as good as their copy, photography, and video. With hotels being up against not only their competitors but also thousands of micro-moments that distract consumers on the internet, a multi-channel content strategy that engages consumers throughout the marketing funnel will be more important than ever.

Video content will remain king.

Social media engagement doesn't lie. It's been proven time and time again that video content garners the most reach and engagement. Video done right can be a big investment, so be sure to maximize it. Even a one-minute video can be broken down into shorter clips, and those clips further broken down into still photography. Just one video can generate many creative assets that can be used for months and across several digital channels.



Content marketers will act like publishers, not advertisers.

Think about how your property offers value beyond the services it provides, and then create content pillars around those targeted topics to capitalize on search interest. Go beyond a blog and invest in a content hub, which houses branded, curated, and user-generated content. As a guiding principle, at least 70% of the content should not be about the property; focus instead on experiential topics like destination activities, restaurants, and more.



User-generated content (UGC) will continue to rise in importance.

Consumers are most likely to trust content posted by people they know. If you haven't already, create a unique hashtag that encourages guests to post about their stay. When they tag the property, they're effectively helping you to reach a new, qualified audience: their friends and family. Reposting UGC is also a great way to encourage loyalty by making that guest feel special, and keeping your property top of mind for future bookings.

Content initiatives will increasingly be pay to play.

Organic reach across social channels may be declining, but this presents as much of an opportunity as it does a challenge. Using Facebook's retargeting capabilities, boosting content with just a few dollars can go a long way in getting the right content in front of the right audience at the right time. From paid social to native advertising to email marketing, a solid distribution strategy will be essential to achieving ROI from content.



BUSINESS NEED SPOTLIGHT | CONTENT THROUGH THE JOURNEY

Answering key business needs through strategic and cost-effective digital marketing is one of the major challenges for hotel marketers. Each quarter, we feature a common business need for hotel brands and highlight effective strategies to optimize your website and drive the right audience to increase conversions.

GET YOUR WEBSITE ON POINT.

Implement an interactive social media wall.

Social media content influences travelers throughout the customer journey, from the dreaming phase to the booking phase to the sharing phase. Showcase brand and user-generated social media content on your website through an interactive social media wall. This is a great way to engage website visitors, build a social media following, and drive guests to share more photos and videos surrounding the property, further enhancing the brand's digital footprint and identity.

Create a content hub on the hotel website.

Travelers invest significant amounts of time in the planning phase, researching accommodations, things to do, travel tips, and more. By creating a content hub with search-engine optimized content, you can attract potential guests to your website organically and keep them on the site longer. Not only does this provide value to potential guests, but it also fosters long-term brand loyalty by positioning the brand as a dependable travel resource.

Get more out of your blog.

The hotel blog provides an opportunity to engage with potential guests in the dreaming phase and as well as locals in your destination. When optimized for the search engines and kept on the domain—instead of a third-party platform like Wordpress—a blog can also provide SEO value and incremental website traffic. Whether you're sharing a property update, travel tips, upcoming events, or the chef's secret recipe, a hotel blog is the perfect platform to connect with travelers and foster brand loyalty.

1

GET YOUR BEST GUEST THERE.

Promote top social media content through native advertising.

A form of paid media where the ad experience follows the natural form and function of the website to appear as organic content, native advertising can be utilized to expand market reach, increase engagement, and drive website traffic. To be truly effective, native ads should feature rich copy and imagery that captures users' attention and encourages them to click through to the website to learn more.

Enable website content in the Google AMP format.

Google AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages) refers to clutter-free versions of a website that load faster and appear in Google's Top Stories carousel on mobile search results. To drive additional website traffic, you can consider creating AMP-optimized pages that promote valuable content surrounding hotel amenities and services, maps and directions, and destination information.

Share blog articles across channels.

Content is meant to be shared. Drive more traffic to your blog by sharing articles across multiple digital channels, from email to social media. To increase reach and awareness among new audiences, take advantage of media opportunities through top travel publications such as sponsored newsletters and articles. By investing in the promotion of valuable content through paid media, you can increase your following and generate more earned media as your audience continues to engage with and share your content.

2

3

FROM THE DESIGN STUDIO | MATCH THEIR AESTHETIC

Knowing what content will resonate with your best guests is hard. Knowing what content should be used at each stage of the conversion funnel is even harder. Hoteliers need to maximize the channels they have at their disposal, and create content that will turn followers and lookers into bookers. Below are steps that strategic hotels are taking to ensure that their content will captivate users and generate direct bookings.



THE BROWN PALACE USES CONTENT TO PUSH USERS TO DEEPER LEVELS OF THE WEBSITE

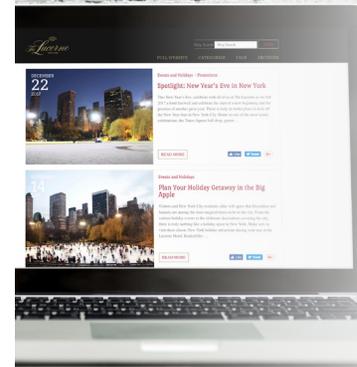
Getting a user to the hotel website is difficult enough, so it's important for hoteliers to have engaging creative that will quickly lead visitors to relevant information that can influence conversions. The Brown Palace Hotel and Spa creates custom images to bring awareness to on-property events, such as a holiday feast. When this type of eye-catching content is implemented, it gives users greater reason to book—plus, website metrics like Page Views and Time on Site improve the SEO health of your hotel's website.



OCEANS EDGE KEY WEST GETS IN FRONT OF USERS IN THE PLANNING PHASE

With an increase of supply and leveling amounts of demand for many markets, it's important to ensure that the unique selling points of a hotel are front and center for the consumer. Oceans Edge Key West utilized Facebook Canvas Ads—an immersive mobile ad experience—to highlight that a stay with them is an upgrade compared to other hotels in the area. Hoteliers should leverage content that is not only visually captivating but also immersive to limit the distractions from other digital micro moments during the travel planning phase.

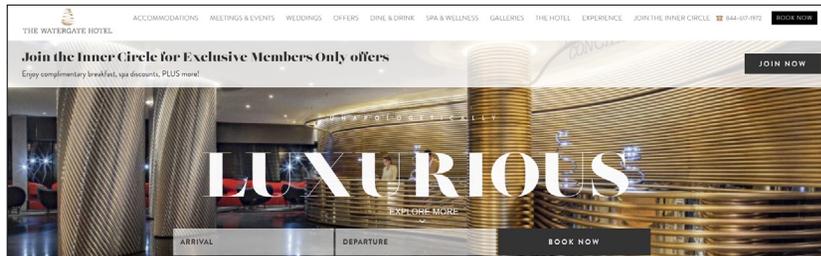
THE LUCERNE POSITIONS THEMSELVES AS THE HERO OF THE DESTINATION



The decision to book a hotel is driven in part by emotion, and in part by logic. A user wants to book a hotel they can trust, as well as a hotel that will give them the best value. The Lucerne Hotel uses their blog as a vertical that allows website visitors to get to know them through their brand voice, while at the same time providing them with content that showcases the amenities and nearby attractions that guests can enjoy. Using easy to digest and informative destination content through a blog is an important piece of any content strategy that users can leverage in the travel research phase.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT | THE LATEST NEWS

A quick recap of the happenings from last quarter, including highlights from our published articles, blogs and other content.



HEBS DIGITAL WINS RECORD-BREAKING 21 HSMAI ADRIAN AWARDS, INCLUDING 10 GOLD

Now in its 61st year, the HSMAI Adrian Awards is among the most prestigious hospitality competitions in the world, celebrating the best of the best in the industry. HEBS Digital is pleased to receive [10 Gold](#), [7 Silver](#) and [4 Bronze Adrian Awards](#) for conversion-focused websites backed by the award-winning smartCMS® website technology platform and innovative digital marketing campaigns.



HEBS DIGITAL CELEBRATES 2017: A YEAR OF BROADENING THE GLOBAL FOOTPRINT, TECHNOLOGY INNOVATIONS AND INDUSTRY RECOGNITION

As 2017 came to a close, HEBS Digital [reflected on the many accomplishments](#) over the year, including continued industry leadership by helping hoteliers across the globe increase direct bookings and lower distribution costs, launching a number of website technology and digital marketing innovations, receiving a record-breaking 66 industry awards, publishing numerous whitepapers, and achieving record-breaking ROIs for its clients.



HOTELIER'S ACTION PLAN TO MAXIMIZE REVENUES FROM THE GOOGLE ECOSYSTEM

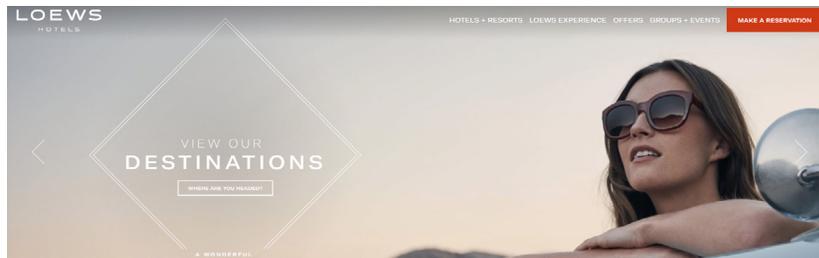
Over the past several years, [hotel advertising on Google](#) has become increasingly complex, due to changes instituted by Google itself, changes in travel consumer planning behavior, and advancements in technology. Developments in technology, desktop, mobile, and travel planning and purchasing behavior have all affected how hoteliers execute various advertising formats in the Google Ecosystem.



THE ELIZABETH HOTEL, A NEW PROPERTY IN FORT COLLINS, GETS READY TO MAKE ITS DEBUT WITH A NEW WEBSITE

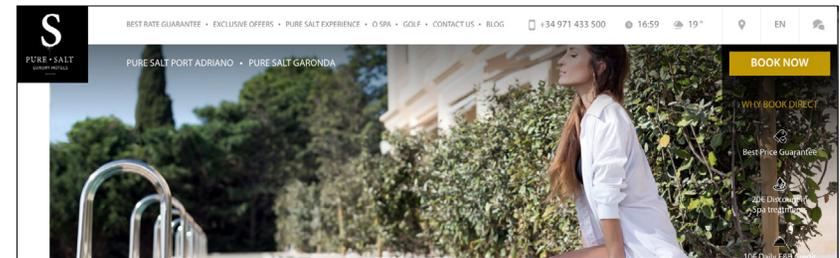
The Elizabeth Hotel, which recently opened in the fall of 2017 in Fort Collins, CO, needed a one-of-a-kind website to reflect their highly anticipated Old Town property. The hotel partnered with the HEBS Digital team to create a fully responsive website, featuring industry-leading technology to drive direct bookings and [showcase The Elizabeth Hotel's thoughtful amenities](#) and vibrant spaces.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT | THE LATEST NEWS



HEBS DIGITAL LAUNCHES A NEW WEBSITE FOR LOEWS HOTELS, BRINGING THEIR SIGNATURE LUXURY EXPERIENCE TO LIFE WITH STUNNING DESIGN & INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

HEBS Digital launched [the new website for Loews Hotels](#), resulting in a completely reinvented and revitalized multi-device digital presence. HEBS Digital worked with the Loews Hotel team to create a website that is both focused on driving conversions and conveying the experience guests twenty-four properties.



HEBS DIGITAL AWARDED NINE TRAVEL WEEKLY MAGELLAN AWARDS FOR ITS WEBSITE DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS BUILT TO BOOST CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND DIRECT BOOKINGS

Travel Weekly announced the winners of the 2017 Magellan Awards, with [HEBS Digital earning nine awards](#) total. All winning websites offer the perfect combination of “beauty and science,” and are backed by the smartCMS® website technology platform, which provides hoteliers robust merchandising capabilities, engaging visual and textual content, personalization capabilities, and a way to provide an optimum website user experience with the highest conversion rates.



HEBS DIGITAL'S "CLOSING THE LOOP ON THE TRAVEL JOURNEY" ARTICLE FEATURED IN THE HOTEL YEARBOOK 2018 - TECHNOLOGY

The Hotel Yearbook launched The Hotel Yearbook 2018 - Technology, an e-book offering technology insights from hospitality industry thought leaders, [featuring an article from HEBS Digital](#). The article discusses how CRM is a critical component to delivering targeted, dynamic, and relevant communication, while also providing invaluable data on a hotel's “best guest,” which in turn can be used to identify and target future guests.



HEBS DIGITAL'S SISTER COMPANY, SERENATA INTRAWARE, VOTED WORLD'S LEADING HOTEL CRM TECHNOLOGY PROVIDER BY THE WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS 2017

Serenata IntraWare, the sister company to HEBS Digital and expert in CRM solutions, has [been voted the World's Leading Hotel CRM Technology Provider](#) by the World Travel Awards for the third consecutive year. This award is voted on by industry experts and peers and recognizes Serenata as one of the foremost authorities on CRM technology in the world. The WTAs, now in their 24th year, honor the best achievements and innovations in the travel and tourism industries of the past year.

METRICS THAT MATTER | BENCHMARKING

When hoteliers are able to use data to measure their creative contributions, they are maximizing their potential to adding to the hotel's bottom line. Below are examples of what strategic hotels are doing to ensure that their creative will captivate users and generate direct bookings.



TURN HEADS WITH FACEBOOK CANVAS

THE TREND: Facebook users spend 3x longer engaging with Facebook Canvas Ads than other social media ad formats.

BEST PRACTICE: A full-screen, immersive rich media format, Facebook Canvas is a great way to engage users on a deeper level. When planning a multichannel campaign, consider including a Facebook Canvas Ad that features rich imagery, copy, and buttons linking to the website. Interactive social media content such as a Facebook Canvas results in greater engagement, brand recognition, and viral promotion, which leads to more followers, clicks to the website, and bookings.



INSPIRE AND CONVERT WITH VIDEOS

THE TREND: Social media ads that feature video generate 2x higher click-through rate than ads that feature a static photo.

BEST PRACTICE: For travel, video is a valuable tool captures users' attention and allows potential guests to experience the product. Create eye-catching video content and showcase it across marketing channels, including the website homepage, social media ads, rich media banners, and more. Ensure that video is compelling from the first five seconds, even when viewed without sound. This will result in greater engagement in the form of views and clicks to the website.

A LITTLE LOYALTY GOES A LONG WAY

THE TREND: HEBS Digital's clients that offer a loyalty program see 33% more bookings from loyal guests and 26% faster repeat business.

BEST PRACTICE: Hotels of all sizes can benefit from a rewards program. Create an Instant Rewards program simply by asking users to submit their email to gain access to exclusive perks and rates. Not only will this help increase email signups, but it will turn new guests into loyal guests and close the loop on the customer journey. More loyal guests lead to more social media followers and repeat visitors to the blog.



CAPITALIZE ON THE GOOGLE ECOSYSTEM

THE TREND: On average, HEBS Digital clients generate a combined ROI of 1,273% by utilizing the full Google Ecosystem including Google Search, Google Display Network, and Google Hotel Ads.

BEST PRACTICE: Take advantage of the Google Ecosystem to maximize results and increase market share within search engine results. Based on your goals, determine the optimal mix of initiatives to ensure that you are reaching your target audience throughout the travel planning journey. Leverage native ads and YouTube TrueView to drive traffic to content and increase website visits, pageviews, and time spent on the website.



*In order to reach the
most valuable guests
throughout the marketing
funnel, hotels should be
leveraging a*

CONTENT STRATEGY

*which will influence
their brand perception,
increase loyalty, and
retain the best guest.*

NICK PAPA

Senior Content Producer, Team Lead

IDEA SHOP | CREATIVE CONCEPTS WORTH STEALING

Small ideas can have a big impact. HEBS Digital's Idea Shop provides quick and easy-to-implement digital marketing ideas to add a dash of extra creativity to your digital strategy and help reach potential guests throughout the marketing funnel.



SHOW WHERE TO SEE AND BE SEEN WITH INSTA STORIES

Millions of people share moments throughout their day using photos and videos on Instagram stories. There's no overposting with Instagram stories—you can share as much as you want, with as much creativity as you want. Whether it's the concierge or a team member from the front desk, identify a social media champion with an on-screen presence. Film them weekly on Friday sharing weekend travel tips, or telling guests what to pack.

GIVE A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK TO GIVE YOUR HOTEL A PERSONALITY

Leverage your team of destination experts—the property staff who actually live and work in the destination—to get your guests on the inside track. Consider a weekly blog series that features an employee and their unique destination recommendation, from the coolest bars to hole-in-the-wall restaurants and unmissable cultural attractions near the hotel. Across search engines and social media, this type of local travel content is in demand.



USE SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS, AND GO VIRAL

Consider working with a social media influencer who is also a content creator. By offering free travel and accommodations, you can attract influencers willing to share your property with their followers, and also create valuable photo assets that you can use on your own digital channels. When selecting an influencer, be sure to look for an engagement rate above 3% (engagement rate per post = number of likes / number of followers x 100).

RE-ENGAGE WEBSITE VISITORS IN THE DREAMING PHASE

Wondering what types of content drive the best results? Implement the Facebook pixel, which makes conversion tracking, optimization, and remarketing easier than ever. Simply add a snippet of code to your website. You'll then be able to measure what happened as a direct result of boosted posts and ads. Discovering which content pillars have the strongest ROI will help you to be strategic about creating and sharing content.



A LOOK OUTSIDE THE INDUSTRY | HEADS IN BEDS

When it comes to digital marketing, inspiration is everywhere you look. In this section, HEBS Digital identifies unique campaigns and initiatives from industries outside hospitality. By getting to the root of what makes these ideas work, we can develop a strategy that taps into the creative tactic and puts heads in beds.

Me: I'm not like the other girls
Also me:

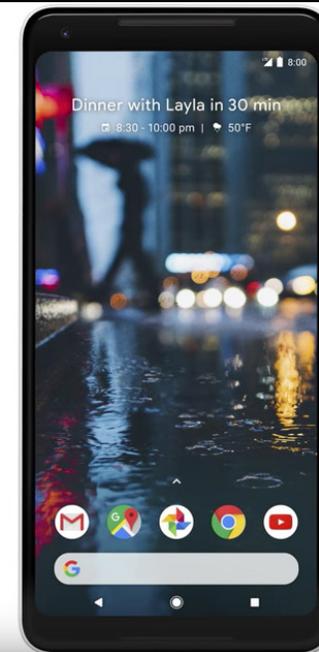


GUCCI'S INSTAGRAM MEMES: For one of Gucci's latest Instagram campaigns, they looked to tap into a younger demographic to raise awareness of their iconic brand. By recreating classic memes accompanied by the hashtag #TFWGUCCI, they were able to take advantage of the current internet trends that resonated with their target audience.

HOW THIS CAN PUT HEADS IN BEDS: Appealing to new demographics is a challenge but hotels shouldn't be afraid to test the waters, especially on social media platforms! By using humor and relevant cultural references, hotels can up their status as well as improve brand recognition.

GOOGLE PIXEL 2 "YOUR NEW HOME" VIDEOS: Google launched its Pixel 2 with a new take on explaining all of the features of the phone. Customers receive a welcome email with a link that brings them to full screen video tutorials made to appear like the people in the video are interacting with the phone's interface.

HOW THIS CAN PUT HEADS IN BEDS: It's increasingly important for hotels to stay in contact with their guests, before and during their stays. By utilizing emails and videos, hotels can give guests the run down on amenities, events, and dining specials in order to enhance each guest's time on the property.



Your
New
Home



MORE ABOUT US:

Through its Smart Guest Acquisition Suite, including the smartCMS®, Smart Personalization Engine, Smart Data Marketing, and full-stack digital consulting and marketing solutions, HEBS Digital helps hoteliers drastically boost direct bookings, lower distribution costs, and increase lifetime value of guests. Founded in 2001, the firm has won over 400 prestigious industry awards for its digital marketing and website design services.

Part of NextGuest Technologies, HEBS Digital and Serenata CRM, the most comprehensive Hotel CRM Suite today, are the creators of the hospitality industry's first Fully-Integrated Guest Engagement & Acquisition Platform.

Who can benefit from HEBS Digital services:

**Top tier major hotel brands • Luxury and boutique hotel brands • Resorts and casinos
Hotel management companies • Franchisees and independents • CVBs • Restaurants**



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