

INTERNET

Four Seasons provides tips and getaways for prolific Instagrammers

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Four Seasons Hotel Toronto

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Four Seasons Hotel and Resorts is keeping things in focus with its new visual education series.

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"Focus on Four Seasons" will offer tips to take the perfect photograph and curate the best images captured at Four Seasons hotels by professional photographers and the average Instagramming consumer alike. Meeting consumers on a platform they enjoy in a rewarding fashion helps keep a brand visible and attractive to consumers.

"Soliciting and sharing user-generated content has become a significant focus of our content strategy at Four Seasons," said Elizabeth Pizzinato, senior vice president, marketing and communications for Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. "The natural desire for guests to share their vacation experiences with their networks is nothing new think of postcards but now we have a breadth of social channels, like Instagram, that facilitate this behavior and make it accessible to brands.

"This wealth of user content represents a huge opportunity for Four Seasons, and one of the ways we're capitalizing on it is by showcasing this content across our branded sites. We know that consumers look to user-generated content as much if not more than branded content, so featuring it on our site allows us to highlight the extraordinary Four Seasons experience through a personal guest lens.

"Campaign-driven calls-to-action for user-generated content can produce strong visuals, generate high engagement, and in turn be leveraged across all of our channels. This is the intention of Focus on Four Seasons, and particularly the #FocusFSChallenge Instagram contest. With all the amazing photo opps offered by our collection of hotels and resorts around the world, we're excited to see the breadth of imagery shared with us from our fans and celebrate the art of travel photography."

One thousand words

Tips include an attention on lighting and details to more unexpected advice about angles and reflections. Similarly, photos from all over the world work to bring out the consumer's inner-traveler.

After reading the tips, the consumer is encouraged to take her own snaps and post them to Instagram using #FocusFS. The best of the bunch will be showcased on Four Seasons' gallery on its Web site.



Hausmannian buildings and Eiffel Tower, taken from penthouse of Four Seasons Paris; photo by Lesley Murphy

The use of consumer-generated content on a brand site is an increasingly common way of making consumers feel like equals rather than like targets for advertisements. Using #FocusFS to display consumers' photos is a natural extension for Four Seasons, which already makes extensive use of consumers' photos.



Shot of over-water bungalows near Four Seasons Bora Bora; photo by Don Riddle

"Photography is a compelling way to tell a story, with a single evocative image often saying more than words alone," Ms. Pizzinato said. "We love the visual stories our guests tell about Four Seasons through their photography, and with Focus on Four Seasons, we want to inspire travellers to keep snapping, and keep sharing their memorable experiences at Four Seasons destinations around the globe."



Shot of Dubai from the Burj Khalifa; photo by Sean and Jennifer Nguyen

Once they are done practicing, or when they take a photo they find especially worthy, consumers can tag the image #FocusFSChallenge on Instagram and enter a contest on fourseasonsmagazine.com to win a trip to Four Seasons hotels in Budapest and Prague, Maui and Hualalai, HI or Beverly Hills and Santa Barbara, CA. Participants must take photos that fulfill the categories "design and architecture," "local culture," "nature's wonder" and "me, in the moment."

Smartphones and the increased accessibility have made photography and photo-sharing reach unprecedented popularity, with younger consumers being particularly prone to selfies and Instagram use. Four Seasons' regular

attempts to keep in touch with that market through initiatives like Focus On Four Seasons could go a long way in generating loyalty.



Palm Grove Pool at Four Seasons Resort Hualalai; photo by Kirsten Alana

Similarly, the heavy Instagram push will recruit new followers for Four Seasons, another way of keeping the brand at the front of mind when consumers begin to plan a vacation.

"With the influencer tips and social media platforms incorporated within Focus on Four Seasons, we believe that a broad spectrum of consumers, including the millennial traveler, will find the campaign to be both inspirational and fun to participate in," Ms. Pizzinato said. "Whether a first-time guest or a frequent traveler to our properties, Focus on Four Seasons will create a desire to continue having Four Seasons experiences around the globe."

Adapt and snap

Four Seasons is consistently rethinking how it can adapt to new consumer behavior.

A globalized and democratized world means that luxury brands need to rethink the way they connect with consumers, according to a Four Seasons representative speaking at Luxury Interactive 2015 on Oct. 15.

Trends ranging from the influx of influential millennial travelers to the globalization of the consumer base and the proliferation of user-generated content offer opportunities for a brand to reinforce its legacy and commitment to excellence. To make true on the promise of the name, brands will have to be bold and creative, adapting constantly to change and targeting consumers individually and by region, all while staying true to brand identity ([see story](#)).

The hospitality brand is increasingly looking to Instagram contests to foster engagement.

Four Seasons' New York hotel property looked through the lens of its social media followers this summer with a season-long Instagram contest revolving around views of the city.

The Instagram contest was led with the hashtag #MyNYCView and asked residents and visitors to share their personal views of the city. The hotel shaped the contest from within by looking at the geotag location for the property and understanding that guests were overwhelmingly Instagramming from their own hotel rooms ([see story](#)).

"Consumer behaviour has shifted; they now have so many different channels on which to communicate with brands and with each other," Ms. Pizzinato said. "What hasn't changed is the underlying desire to share vacation experiences with their networks.

"We were the first luxury hospitality brand to build a presence on Instagram because we recognized the opportunity for the platform to facilitate this consumer behavior to share the unforgettable locations and experiences Four Seasons offers. However, the move to channels like Instagram is not at the expense of other forms of interaction with our guests; we strive to communicate with each guest in the way they choose.

"Personalization is the cornerstone of the Four Seasons guest service model, and social media has simply added another layer to our ability to personalize the guest experience and tailor our one-on-one interactions accordingly throughout the guest journey. This tailored approach ensures our interactions with our guests are always authentic and customized to their unique preferences."

Final Take

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