

MULTICHANNEL

Consumer journey funnel leads from inspiration to digital integration

January 22, 2016



Travel + Leisure updates for the modern reader

By JEN KING

NEW YORK For those in the print media space, the rise of digital platforms has become a driver in total growth, according to the editor in chief of Travel + Leisure at Luxury FirstLook: Strategy 2016.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246** ▶

During "The New Travel + Leisure: Aligning Platforms to Audience Behavior" session, the Time Inc.-owned publication's Nathan Lump discussed the magazine's core audience and how its approach has been retooled to follow readers through a journey rather than just inspire one. Just as digital has evolved brand strategy, it has also evolved consumer expectations and behavior, giving Travel + Leisure an opportunity to consider how each platform can better serve its readership.

"It's important for us to understand, and it's a cornerstone of our strategy at Travel + Leisure recently, is that those behaviors, once they tip over into the active, or targeted searching, those behaviors are increasingly, almost exclusively digital," said Nathan Lump, editor in chief of **Travel + Leisure**, New York.

"What that means when we think about print, and the power of print, print is still a really effective tool for us at that first stage of the journey," he said. "But, once people move into that other mindset, they're not in print with us anymore, they're in digital.

"I think that actually provides us with a really important road map for what we do, what we are doing with the brand."

Luxury FirstLook: Strategy 2016, held on Jan. 20, was organized by Luxury Daily.

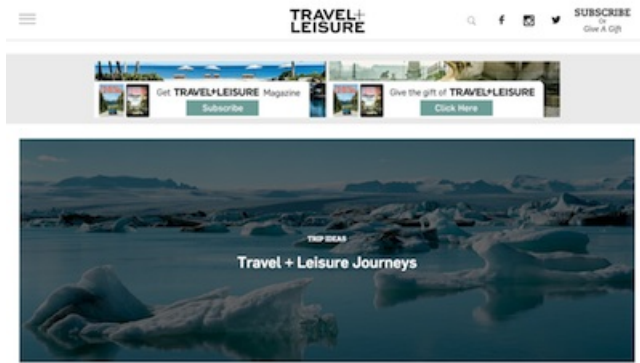
Part of the journey

Travel + Leisure began its business in print nearly 40 years ago and has established a rate base of just under 1 million, of which 97 percent have a passport, whereas only 50 percent of the United States population can say the same. The passion of its travelers is evident, and to better serve its readers, Travel + Leisure took its brand to the next level through digital and social integration.

While the publication has seen growth in print, which has not become the average case for media, Travel + Leisure acknowledged that the development of its digital channels would result in continued growth.

Print continues to be an integral aspect for inspiration, speaking to the mind of consumers during their coveted "lean back time." But consumer behaviors have changed to expect digital options, resulting in the publication

increasing output for its many platforms.



Travel + Leisure Web site

Mr. Lump described the consumer travel journey as non-linear, but rather a funnel. At the top of the funnel is inspiration and entertainment, presenting the publication with a chance to speak to a large audience through its content.

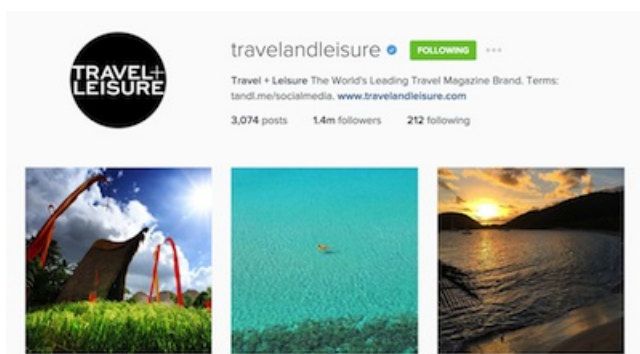
Further down within the funnel, inspiration becomes research as consumers turn from print to digital and social to discover which type of experience melds with their lifestyle. This aspect of the consumer journey has become Travel + Leisure's cornerstone strategy recently.

With digital playing across the entire journey, Travel + Leisure offers a wide range of content types to deliver information that entertains and inspires its readers. This has also become important as some readers in the genre do not read print, consuming only content found online.

Much of Travel + Leisure growth has stemmed from social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Travel + Leisure found that to have a well-adapted social presence across popular channels there needs to be numerous social strategies because behavior differs by channel.

With 1.8 and 1.4 million followers respectively on Twitter and Facebook, Mr. Lump cited Instagram as one channel that has allowed the publication to create a nuanced approach.

While Travel + Leisure's Instagram account, which has 1.4 million followers, may not result in a high Web KPI the way that Twitter and Facebook do, it has become an intrinsic branding tool.



Travel + Leisure on Instagram, desktop version

Followers on Instagram are much more inclined to share with the publication using its branded hashtag. This has created a sense of community among readers because it allows them to their passions with like minded individuals.

During his presentation, Mr. Lump also shared that while it is common for media brands to be slightly behind the curve in terms of video engagement, Travel + Leisure has plans to catch up for 2016.

Video serves as a cornerstone of travel engagement, finding placement at the top of the funnel to inspire and engage through entertainment.



Nathan Lump at Luxury FirstLook: Strategy 2016

"Print is still our core business, it's our key revenue driver and we feel very fortunate that print has been healthy and actually growing," Mr. Lump said.

"On the digital side, digital is actually very profitable for us as an operation," he said. "Our revenue is very strong, and we're projected to crossover at some point in the next year or two maximum in terms of contribution of digital to our overall profit.

"It actually translates for us very favorably, but that isn't true for every genre."

Concentrating on the story

In April 2015 Travel + Leisure reworked its print format to account for its Web site overhaul and better express the title's content to its passionate and travel-focused readership.

For its relaunch, Travel + Leisure began exploring different formats that put travel storytelling at the forefront of its content on both Web and in print.

Mr. Lump and his team developed a new homepage for Travel + Leisure that updated its old site from a busy, text-heavy format to a more modern and immersive design. Web-based content is presented in a refreshed look and feel that is consistent with the publication's redesign as a whole. This works to create a cleaner user experience that uses visuals rather than copy as a motivator ([see story](#)).

"I think the assumption a lot of the time is that [digital audiences] are a lot younger, a lot less affluent," Mr. Lump said. "Interestingly enough, 24-35 years old is the fastest growing print segment in our current subscription base.

"Web and print are not wildly different demographically, but psychographically they can be a bit different," he said. "I would argue that the degree of passion for the subject [differs], I think we have to work a bit harder to engage and draw in our typical digital user versus our print user who has taken an active step to subscribing to the magazine.

"Social, it gets much more diverse. Social audiences are quite varied, but again that core print demographic is present throughout all of our platforms."