

HOTELS

CARIBBEAN REBOOT

VIDEO MARKETING STRATEGIES

RAISING BAR BUSINESS

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television with the ramones

Mid-market to the

MAX





Anantara Siam
Bangkok General
Manager Patrick
Both pauses for a
relaxing moment in
a video originally
created by the
property for a
travel agent
networking event.



One scene in the
video has GM Both
meticulously
adjusting an
ottoman.

SHARING is *caring*

HOW SHORT, PEOPLE-DRIVEN VIDEOS REALLY DO REEL IN GUESTS.

By CHLOE RILEY, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

At the beginning of the video, we see a dashing gentleman in a perfectly tailored blue suit scan the hotel lobby over the balcony before heading down to the bar to pick up his morning coffee. He's sleek, he's composed and his eye is turned on everything around him.

The man is Patrick Both, general manager at Anantara Siam Bangkok in Thailand, and the video was initially developed by a team on property for Virtuoso Travel Week, an annual travel agent networking event. Well-received during the event itself, the minute-and-a-half video ended up being a hit on social with 104,000 views and over 900 shares since it was posted on Facebook in late August.

In many ways, the video is a showcase of Both, following him around the property at every turn as he tastes turkey, dutifully adjusts the placement of an ottoman and generally flashes his GM charm.

"The inclusion of Patrick as the leading man was done intentionally to convey two very specific messages on two fronts – the human touch and the unexpected surprise," says Etienne De Villiers, the hotel's public relations director.



Watch Anantara Siam Bangkok's video of GM Patrick Both online and get a special **HOTELS** play-by-play of what the property got right. Watch at hotelsm.ag/AnantaraGMvideo



Screenshot from a 35-second video included in Two Roads' "Spotlight on Seattle" series showcasing the city's top five mochas

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR FRIENDS

It's the kind of personality-driven content marketing strategy where shareability trumps all else. In 2016, Facebook introduced a change to its news feed algorithm that meant content posted by a user's family and friends would be given more visibility while promotional content from business pages would appear less frequently.

That shift means taking a harder look at both user-generated content and content that users actually care to share, according to Edward St. Onge, president of Orlando-based content marketing group Flip.to.

"What we try to educate hotels on is: Marketing should be a conversation," St. Onge says. "You wouldn't walk up to a stranger in a bar and say, 'Hey! Why don't you come sleep over?' Marketing is the same thing. It should involve people, not buildings. Buildings shouldn't talk to people because people don't trust buildings."

According to St. Onge, showing off the GM is a content marketing no-brainer, as it's both the property's most public position and the one with the lowest turnover.

Flip.to's strategy encourages guests to participate in photo contests that typically make both the guest and their friends and family who share the content immediately eligible for prizes such as a free night's stay at various hotels.

And family and friends can go a long way. In an internal case study, Flip.to found an instance where a grandmother with 541 followers drummed up 1,843 unique visits to a property's site.

The internal study compared that to a social media influencer with over 247,000 followers who generated only 23 of those same visits.

Flip.to measures ROI in terms of how many guests became "advocates" — that is, users who create content and share it. By its measurement, that number should be at the very least 18% of a hotel's guests. One step further is that of unique visitors who get an opportunity for a one-night stay; the goal is to get 8% to 10% to claim that offer.

SHORT AND SWEET

Getting users to engage with content also means considering their attention spans (or lack thereof). Englewood, Colorado-based Two Roads

“WHAT WE TRY TO EDUCATE HOTELS ON IS: MARKETING SHOULD BE A CONVERSATION.”

EDWARD ST. ONGE, PRESIDENT, FLIP.TO

Hospitality recently launched a video series exploring the various cities of each of its seven brands. The sweet spot for video length? Just 20 to 50 seconds.

“It’s not just about the length,” says Fiona Boyce, Two Roads’ director of social media and content marketing. “It really is the content of what you’re showing. So we’ve found what kind of music people respond to better, quick shots versus long, and making sure the cover image that people see for the video is really attention-grabbing, that’s really important, too.”

The videos, posted on Facebook and Instagram as well as the properties’ individual blogs, have since averaged 150,000 views.

One video, part of the company’s #Thompson “Uncovered: Spotlight on Seattle” series featured a 35-second video with quick edits depicting the city’s top five mochas. Its launch was strategically timed for National Coffee Day, a move that Boyce says helped garner some 132,000 views and 54 shares on Facebook.

“That really showed that if you can proactively

create content around something people are interested in and talking about, you will get much higher levels of engagement,” Boyce says. “Sharing is the golden circle of great content.”

If anything, shorter videos should make it easier to convey brand message, says Bek Van Vliet, content director for hotel and travel branding agency Quo Global, Bangkok.

Smart content doesn’t have to mean elaborate shots and sleek editing, according to Van Vliet. It can be a 15-second or shorter video, and she says even “one-shot” videos (waves, a city scene, sunset time lapses) can be very effective.

And these videos can be taken using a smartphone.

“Think about Vine and Boomerang videos on Instagram – they’re only a few seconds long, but you only need a few seconds to elicit an emotional response,” Van Vliet says. “Having said that, the emotional response needs to be the right one, which means having a sound strategy.

“Key messages should be simple and they should be articulated them with strong visuals,” she adds.



Screenshot from Two Roads Hospitality’s “Spotlight on Seattle” series

CONTENT MARKETING AWARENESS

from social strategist

BENJI GREENBERG



A SNAPSHOT OF THE STATE OF THINGS FROM THE CEO OF BCV EVOLVE, A TECH-ENABLED SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT COMPANY.

SOCIAL NETWORK ALGORITHMS

One out of every five minutes on mobile is spent by users on Facebook or Instagram.

Algorithms govern what we see and what we don't across all social platforms. This was a necessity due to the ever-increasing amount of content vying for your attention (from both friends and businesses).

Competition and noise in your feeds have led the networks to fully adopt pay to play – regardless of

audience size or how good your content is, you must utilize a paid spend to reach the right customers on these channels.

VIDEO CONTENT

Video continues to be prioritized on social networks with better reach and placement in each network's feed.

Each social network is attempting to expand its reach in video by offering "live" streaming options, exclusive content partnerships and even original programming. Video content

continues to shift to shorter videos that get a message across in under 15 seconds and are of higher quality than we've seen.

MESSAGING

There has been continued growth across messaging platforms such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Line and WeChat.

Some 43% of travelers surveyed would prefer to interact with providers via mobile messaging than over the phone.

Guests are increasingly turning to

messaging channels to interact with hotels to solve issues and answer questions.

The largest challenge is connecting social customer care with on-site customer care to provide a unified experience for guests.

Geolocation refers to a photo that is tagged to a set of coordinates (such as the hotel) but doesn't necessarily mention the property, and geolocation message volume is now one of the fastest-growing "message types" we see hotels dealing with.

ANIMATION STATION

Simple and strong visuals are the name of the game for CitizenM's short animations around the opening of its new CitizenM Paris Charles de Gaulle.

The company tapped the Jullien Brothers (Jean Jullien was behind the much-shared "Pray for Paris" symbol following the city's 2015 terrorist attacks) to create eight shorts showcasing the hotel's amenities.

Cartoonish figures and accordion music dominate each animation, which clock in at around 11 seconds apiece.

"We have a real affinity of working with artists," says Robin Chadha, the company's chief marketing officer. "Art is really part of our DNA at CitizenM, so it also makes sense that it comes back around in our communications strategy."

The idea for animations came back in 2014 when Chadha was looking for ways to tout brand without having a huge budget. The first experiment, around the opening of CitizenM Times Square, was "Swan Song," a 46-second short following the burgeoning love of two swans made out of hotel towels.

That video, created by stop-motion wizard Pes (he of the much-YouTubed "Fresh Guacamole" fame) received over 1.6 million views on YouTube.

So far, the CitizenM Charles de Gaulle shorts haven't seen those kinds of numbers. According to Chadha, at the risk of sharing something perceived as an ad, the Jullien Brothers haven't post the videos on their own social networks – an unexpected move that put a damper on potential engagement from the brothers' followers.

But CitizenM makes sure its videos have a long

life span. Already getting shares on Facebook and Instagram, the Jullien Brothers videos also run on a loop within the new hotel's guestrooms, and Chadha says they plan to use them on future blog posts as well.

Though Chadha couldn't disclose how much the videos cost, he did say they weren't "terribly expensive."

Anantara Siam Bangkok's video with GM Patrick Both, on the other hand, cost US\$1,500 to produce just over a minute and a half of content.

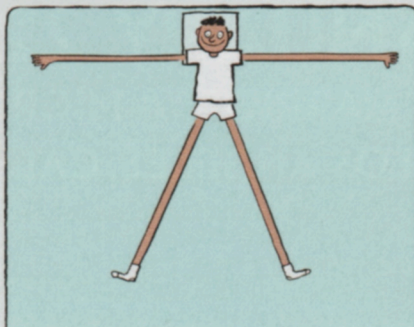
According to Both, the level of property recognition was well worth the money.

"The many messages of congratulations that we received from our regular guests and colleagues and friends in hospitality and travel around the world tell us that we've hit the right note amongst the right audience," Both says.

"We believe we achieved what we set out to do - portray the humanity in the luxury hospitality sector that has the human element as one its most important pillars."



XL BED



A screenshot from one of eight shorts created by the Jullien Brothers for the launch of CitizenM Paris Charles de Gaulle

Artist Jean Jullien (behind the much-shared "Pray for Paris" symbol following the city's 2015 terrorist attacks) was co-creator of one of eight shorts for the launch of CitizenM Paris Charles de Gaulle.

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Waffle Weave Double Thread
Weave

The new Hudson Hookless® Curtain (above left) is made of 100% polyester diamond waffle fabric in a modern and luxurious frost grey color.

The new Sonoma Hookless® Curtain (above right) is made of 100% polyester fabric. The white stripes are a waffle weave fabric and the taupe stripes are made from a double thread weaving technique that creates depth. The Neutral colors will match your existing décor, while the bold stripes make an impact.

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