WHAT'S HOLDING TRAVEL ECOMMERCE TEAMS BACK?

Practical questions to help you overcome your top challenges in travel.

Advice from:

Expedia contiki trainline Thomas Cook

SINGAPORE AIRLINES First Golfbreaks.com *Saving golfers time and money* minicabit

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What do Britney Spears, swimming pools, cocktail making and travel ecommerce have in common?

Well, they all featured prominently on a sumptuous Thursday night, where Contentsquare welcomed a selected batch of ecommerce experts in the travel industry to an exclusive evening of digital discussion to chat through the most pressing issues in travel ecommerce.

Leaders from brands such as **Thomas Cook**, **Expedia**, **Singapore Airlines**, **Trainline**, **Contiki** and more, fuelled by the house red, bottomless Peroni and a variety of canapés (including some outstanding goats cheese nibs) opened up to share their digital challenges.

So, what's holding travel ecommerce teams back?

Data silos and prioritisation?

"We have about 30 different 'single sources of truth'. You're not alone."

The major theme of the evening was the big scary behemoth that always remains a significant challenge for optimising digital properties. Data.

Pretty much all of the brands on the table struggled in some way, shape or form with the issue of siloed data. Getting access to data wasn't the issue, but knowing how to interpret data and actually utilise the insight into a tangible action was a commonality. Many brands struggled with the foresight to enable them to effectively prioritise the reams of data they have access to. Some of the brands with smaller teams with limited analytics resource, trying to make the correct priorisation decisions is paramount but a daily struggle.

"We need to democratise data, those of us with not much analytics resource have got to be clever with what we have"

So, what can be done?

Breaking out of the data shackles.

First off there's no silver bullet.

However the **questions below** should help you focus on specific digital challenges that need to be solved. We've heard many different answers to these over time, but our advice is, for the questions which you can't easily answer but would like to, these should be the starting points for you to further explore and address.

1. UX improvement & insight
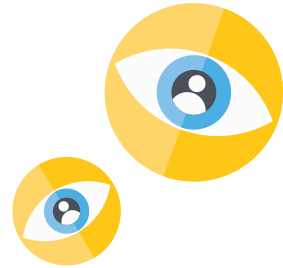
- Does your data allow you to view all the relevant metrics quickly? For example, if click rate increases on ancillary items but conversion and revenue are lower. Can you easily access the onward impact of the click to make sure you make the right decisions?

- Can you identify the biggest areas of visitor frustration on your site? Can you accelerate this process?

- How do you identify what the most important factor is for a customer when booking. What are the key drivers that make your consumers want to book with you?
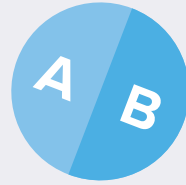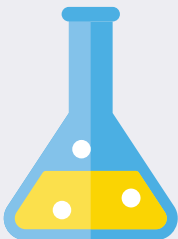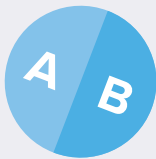
2. A/B testing

- If you run an A/B test and the results are very similar, how do you investigate further as to which variant to choose?

- If a test decreases conversion but increases a specific goal is that a success? How do you measure success of a test?

- When setting testing roadmaps – do you prioritise customer needs over brand needs – and do you consider how much benefit will your visitors gain from any particular optimisation decision?

3. Prioritisation and hypothesis generation

- How do you act on customer insight? How do you put changes into production?

- How do you choose areas of focus when it comes to optimisation? What dictates decision-making within the business?

- How do you define a problem, do you do this based on what the data tells you then create a hypothesis, or create a hypothesis and then let data validate this? Does the data define the problem or vice versa?

- How do you prioritise your backlog? When solving this roadmap do you rank this based on the size of customer problems?

- How can you measure the effectiveness of your content? You change your content to keep up with seasons and trends, but can you really measure if it works and if it's ROI positive?

4. Conversion rate optimisation

- How are you approaching conversion rate optimisation? Do you wish to increase CR across the board, or just for specific customer groups?

- How are you combatting the increasing costs of acquisition? How are you ensuring you're converting more of your site traffic?

- Which sources of data do you use to uncover areas for improvement?

- Is conversion rate alone the most essential metric? What other UX KPI's do you measure?
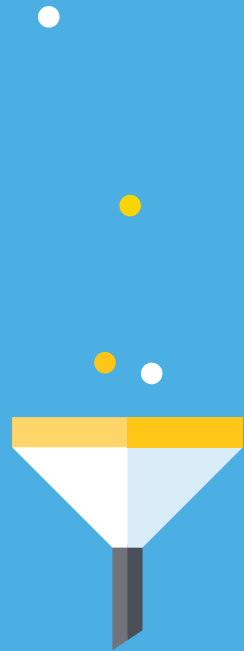
5. Organisational structure

- How much do your teams have influence over specific parts of the customer journey? Have you thought about what is most effective for your organisation? What areas of the customer journey need most priority?
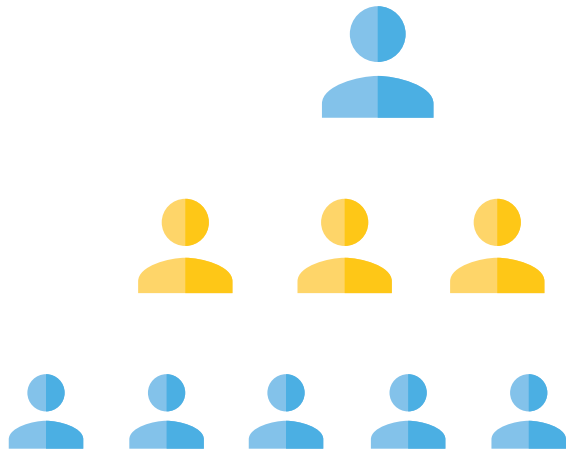
6. Data management and resource

- How far down are you on your path to democratise the use of data within your organisation? Are your teams/colleagues empowered to access role-specific insight easily? If not, what can be done?

- What's your method which allows you to allocate sufficient resource away from day to day projects and tasks to focus on working on your overarching strategic goals?

- Is development resource a problem? Can you quantify enough problems to justify the cost of another developer?

7. Segmentation

- Do you know who your most profitable customers are? One brand found people who book twice a year are much more profitable than those who book once a year, knowing this information means you can have a laser focus on these customers to increase frequently. Once you understand their data points, unique journeys, habits and behaviours you concentrate on converting more of your visitors.

- How are you defining your customer segments? Are these persona based (e.g family of 4) or behavioural based (e.g. 4 sessions, interest in 2 week summer holiday...)

- How do you deliver different experiences to different customer segments? How do you ensure these experiences are consistent throughout the customer journey / number of channels?

- Do you change your on-site experience based on international behaviours? If it's the same site experience, why is that? Do you know how different international visitors behave and how to cater for these?

8. Loyalty

- Does the increasing lack of loyalty within the marketplace change how you look for new customers? How do you retain the loyal customers you already have?

9. Channels

- Are your various channels still relevant to conversion?

- How are you working to increase the share of direct bookings (online/contact centre) versus relying on channel partners and agents?

10. Mobile App

- Are you seeing a customer shift to mobile/ app and are your resources and focus diverted proportionally?

- When app testing, purpose is pertinent. Is your primary success metric and purpose; app downloads, sales, loyalty or something else? Is the focus purely bookings or building loyalty or a way to collate data insights or a mixture of them both? When looking at app resource, do you have a defined purpose?

- How can you utilise your apps to earn it's right to stay on a customer's smart phone's real estate? Are your best fares/prices on the app only? Can you make specific bookings only using the app? What value is it adding and does it drive your apps purpose?

About Contentsquare

Contentsquare visually surfaces user journeys enabling leading retailers to understand why customers are leaving their site as well as measure the revenue and behavioural contribution of any 'block' of content. We help you understand your golden or broken customer journeys and feed actionable insights to test hypothesis and recognise why tests are winning or inconclusive.

We work with over 200 customers including LVMH, Kering Group, L'Occitane, Moss Bros, Feel Unique, Space NK, Matches Fashion, Joules, Harvey Nichols, L'Oreal and more helping them transform their user experience. For more information, please visit:

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