emarsys

LIVE EMAIL CONTENT:

THE NEXT REVOLUTION IN TRAVEL MARKETING

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Regardless of why an individual is traveling, be it for business or pleasure, and no matter where they're headed or how they're going to get there, they have a number of unique details to manage. Each itinerary has its own distinct set of addresses, schedules, modes of transportation, accommodations, confirmation numbers, and even weather forecasts.

The marketer's mission is to deliver travelers this personalized, valuable information, making every trip smooth and stress-free, and ensuring they keep coming back for future journeys. However, with flight, hotel, and weather information changing constantly, this mission often feels impossible. Email content is often outdated if the recipient doesn't open it right away. In fact, it can be out-of-date as quickly as five minutes after it's sent.

But there's a technology solution for optimized travel communication; Open Time Content (OTC) offers marketers in the travel industry a completely new way to engage with customers, through messages that are personalized at the moment the recipient opens the email, not when it's sent. Imagine the possibilities.

THE LIMITATIONS OF TRADITIONAL TRAVEL EMAILS

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Before Artificial Intelligence (AI) and email automation, travelers had to rely on transactional emails for confirmation, and then prepare to be drowned in promotional content unrelated to their trip.

Beyond a flight confirmation number, the information was neither relevant nor useful, and some travelers were so turned off that they booked their next vacation with a different company. Even after automation, travel emails can still miss the mark, primarily because content is populated when the emails are sent, not when they are opened.

And so much can change between the send and open times, including things like flight details, currency exchange rates, and seat availability.

Travel marketers seeking to provide their customers with truly up-to-date information face the following challenges:

- It's difficult to deliver the most current information when flights and hotel rooms are especially dynamic in price and availability, changing by the minute.
- Creating excellent content takes time, but it can't take so much time that the content is out of date when the customer finally sees it.
- It's hard to stay ahead of the curve when campaigns must constantly be reviewed and renewed due to expired offers or countdowns.
- Without an intuitive user interface allowing the marketer to set up rules in minutes, content personalization and automation requires significant resources.

THEN VS. NOW

Technology has changed how marketers are able to provide information to travelers. Compare what used to be acceptable with what is possible today.

Which column do your brand's emails fall into?

THEN	NOW
Automated triggers sent static emails on certain key days where the email contents were fixed the moment the email is sent.	Automated triggers send dynamic emails at key moments. By using Send Time Optimization, in conjunction with Open Time Content, you get the full Artificial Intelligence Marketing (AIM) guarantee that not only will your email send at the right time, your content will always be engaging.

MODERN TRAVEL EMAILS MAKE THINGS MORE PERSONAL

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Where pre-travel emails used to be the primary touch point available to measure effectiveness, travel marketers can now interact with customers before, during, and after the trip, and Open Time Content provides a suite of widgets that serve as placeholders to call up live, personalized content.

With Open Time Content, marketers can:

- Increase CTRs by 10%-20%.
- Boost engagement and conversion, driving click-to-open rates (CTORs) above 15%.
- Trade labor-intensive content creation processes for easy-to-manage lifecycle program maintenance.
- Deliver high-quality email more frequently, without increasing budget or marketing team headcount.

THEN

Travelers had to rely on multiple sources for reminders, reservations, itineraries, and weather forecasts.

NOW

Travelers rely on one source; all information is provided in a dynamic email or mobile app.

THE TRAVEL EMAIL CHECKLIST

If you have successfully delivered memorable trips to customers in the past, but you're not investing much effort in modernizing your email strategy, how will you compete against an agency that captures your customer's attention with a newsletter of bespoke content curated especially for them? Or a personalized offer that appeals directly to their preferences? Once that customer has received such customized engagement, it might be too late for you to retain their loyalty to your brand.

Here's a checklist to help you deliver this level of personalization to customers, before your competitors do:

- A personalized boarding pass with always up-to-date flight information.

- A link to self-check-in, with a countdown timer showing how much time is left until it opens. After check-in, the timer automatically changes to a departure countdown, and then perhaps an arrival or a promotional countdown begins..

- Device-targeted email messages that encourage the traveler to download your mobile travel app.

- Live currency exchange rates for the traveler's destination.

- Real-time weather information at the destination, and a five-day forecast that updates whenever viewed.

- Live rental car, hotel room, and flight seating availability, with real-time prices.

- Activity recommendations based on the date of arrival, availability, and local weather.

- GPS directions to the airport, from wherever the recipient is located when they read the email.

IMPRESS THE PROSPECTIVE TRAVELER WITH LIVE PRICING AND FLIGHT AVAILABILITY

The traveler's planning phase is a key moment for a travel brand to impress potential customers, especially the ones who wait until the last minute to finalize their plans.

They want instant access to accurate pricing information, and by using Open Time Content's automation features, marketers can link content from multiple websites to populate emails with live data. It's a seamless experience from the customer's point of view, as they open their email and can see which flights still have open seats, and exactly how much tickets will cost at the very moment they are browsing.

To boost a travel brand's reputation, OTC also allows the inclusion of social proof signals to indicate how many people are viewing related hotels, in real time. Additionally, when existing customers leave positive comments, those social messages establish credibility and trust among potential customers.

THEN

Email included the flight number, departure date, and confirmation number.

NOW

One email can include live information about flights, hotels, seat and room availability, currency exchange rates, weather, and more.

Live hotel availability in Paris

It's not too late to book! From cheap and cheerful chalets to high-end hotels, we've got something to suit you.

**Europe Hotel
Only 1 room left!**

Last booked 15 mins ago, 12 people looking at this hotel.

Book Now

**Jacques Hotel
4 rooms remaining**

Last booked 1 hour ago, 17 people looking at this hotel.

Book Now

**Villa La Parisienne
7 rooms remaining**

Last booked 3 mins ago, 9 people looking at this hotel.

Book Now

MORE HOTELS

GIVE CUSTOMERS OPTIONS, WITH LIVE SEAT AND ROOM AVAILABILITY

Engage customers right up to the moment they board a plane or arrive at a hotel, by providing real-time options about airline upgrades and seat availability in accurate detail. For example, the traveler could open an email and see the number of upgrade seats available, and exactly where each seat is located.

Take this one step further, create an image showing the customer's name engraved on an airplane seat, and send the message, "This seat can be yours". Likewise, with OTC widgets marketers can provide the same experience for hotels in the destination area.

Select Your Seat

Live seat selection. Here are the seats left right now, click to book.

SELECT SEATS NOW

Unavailable to Book   Available Seat

PERSONALIZE THE TRAVELER'S EXPERIENCE BASED ON WHERE THE EMAIL IS OPENED

The days leading up to a trip are key to building a relationship with a customer as their trusted travel partner. A great way to initiate that relationship is by building their excitement for the trip with imagery that is relevant to their upcoming destination and itinerary.

Open Time Content makes this easy to manage, by allowing marketers to define rules related to device, date, time, weather, location, preferences, and behavior. The Timed Images widget can then be set to cycle through various images from the destination site.

For example, as a traveler preparing for a beach vacation opens an email in their cold, snowy hometown, they could be served two sets of images and weather reports: one for the current location, and the other for the warm, sunny beach getaway they will be enjoying in just a few days.

THEN

Before a trip, the traveler had to manage a bevy of emails, text reminders, and push notifications from multiple apps.

NOW

The traveler receives only valuable and targeted reminders, streamlining communication before, during, and after a trip.

Real-time Weather Forecast

Your current location weather

Dublin, Ireland
53.21°N 6.15°E
16°C
11°C

Your destiny location weather

Tenerife, Spain
28.5°N 16.44°E
27°C
20°C

PERSONALIZE RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON WEATHER

Within the Open Time Content suite, the Weather Forecast widget delivers important information to the traveler that directly impacts their experience. In an email sent before the trip, a weather report can be included to show a live five-day forecast at their destination for the date of arrival. After that, every time the traveler opens that email, they'll see the most up-to-date weather forecast for their trip.

The Weather Aware widget provides marketers the ability to create conditional recommendations based on the weather at the time of open, so that every time the traveler reopens the same email in a different location, the content will be re-contextualized based on the local conditions.

If it is sunny at the destination, recommend summer sightseeing and outdoor dining. If it's raining, an email can automatically display indoor activities like shopping or a visit to a nearby museum.

Real-time Weather Forecast - PARIS

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
18°C	17°C	19°C	18°C	16°C
9°C	6°C	5°C	7°C	7°C

Detailed Forecast ▶

INCLUDE LIVE CURRENCY CONVERSION TO DELIVER TRAVELERS THE BEST RATES

For international travelers, exchange rates are very important. By including a real-time currency feature in an email, marketers can provide exceptional value, helping travelers understand the best time to exchange cash – all from one email.

This is especially useful for travel companies that offer currency exchange services, as it can directly drive business by reminding travelers that the rates being offered at that moment may not be the same the next time they check in.

SPEAK THE TRAVELER'S LANGUAGE

Use Open Time Content widgets to discern your customer's preferred language from your database, and easily present weather updates, flight information, and sightseeing recommendations in the customer's language of choice.

USE COUNTDOWN TIMERS TO HELP TRAVELERS PLAN AHEAD

Provide valuable information to travelers with countdowns to important milestones before, during, and after travel. Keep content fresh by building in conditional support, so when a timer expires, another piece of relevant content loads to take its place.

For example, a countdown timer strategy could look like this:

- Automate an email to include a countdown for a traveler to check-in at the airport.
- When the check-in countdown expires, switch to a departure countdown.
- Follow this with a countdown to check-in at the hotel.
- Then switch to a countdown to hotel check-out.
- Follow this with countdowns for return travel.

THEN	**NOW**
Static emails remind a traveler of when flight check-in begins.	Dynamic emails include live countdowns to important milestones.

Dear Jane

We're lookng forward to welcoming you onboard our flight to Gran Canaria.

CHECK-IN NOW

Online check-in
for your flight closes in:

03	23	14	45
DAYS	HOURS	MINUTES	SECONDS

TARGET CUSTOMERS WITH PERSONALIZED OFFERS

In conjunction with machine learning, Open Time Content can leverage the recipient's favorite destinations, hotels, and other preferences, to target them with personalized special offers.

When machine learning is incorporated into marketing automation, the system learns more from each new data point. This allows for continuous optimization of content, channels, and timing, to engage each contact. The results? Marketers who use machine learning and marketing automation together often see a two- to threefold increase in engagement.

Basic demographic information and preferences can be extrapolated from specific user behavior, and provide a basic picture for each traveler:

- Where does the traveler generally go?
- Which airlines does the traveler prefer?
- What times of the year does the customer tend to travel?

Real Results:

By implementing OTC device-specific targeting tags, one brand saw a 42% increase in app downloads.

Machine learning, in tandem with the OTC Device Targeting widget, can push device-specific content to the user's preferred device, as indicated by the individual's engagement data collected over time.

Ideas to Use:

- Enhance the user experience with content tailored to the customer's preferences.
- Present device-specific promotions that will be most likely to convert.
- Display device-centric content to optimize the user experience.

THEN	NOW
One email was designed for viewing on all devices.	Emails are created with design and content specifically for viewing on the targeted device.

SPECIAL TRAVEL EMAILS YOU SHOULD BE SENDING

WELCOME

Use a welcome email to introduce your company to the customer, and perhaps show seasonal imagery of a popular travel destination. Also, drive interest and urgency with a countdown to a welcome offer.

PRE-ARRIVAL

Show customers the brand cares about them, and create a sense of excitement about the upcoming trip. Include information about check-in (including a countdown) and a live weather forecast.

TIME-TARGETED

Countdown offers inspire a sense of excitement and urgency, and can entice travelers to take advantage of special discounts and promotions.

WEATHER-TARGETED

Summertime offers are the most successful, but some travel agencies have received great responses to cold-weather cruises. To build loyalty right away, send a well-crafted message that includes real-time weather conditions for the recipient's location at the time of open.

PROMOTIONAL

An alert email promoting a travel deal can grab the attention of customers who might not even be seriously planning a trip yet.

BIRTHDAY

While birthday emails don't always result in a conversion, they do make customers feel that a brand cares about them, especially when the message content and images are personalized.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Emails that display user-generated content can strengthen the brand, as travelers share positive trip experiences delivered by the company.

AFTER THE TRIP

Determine the optimal time to contact a customer after the trip, and follow up with personalized content, upcoming flight specials, or recommended trips that fit the customer's profile.

SUMMARY

It's been a long time coming, but we now live in an age where we can keep our marketing promises and deliver truly personalized 1:1 interactions. Travelers want easily accessible, streamlined, current information about their trips, and it's up to marketers to deliver it.

In addition to improving customer experiences by keeping content fresh, Open Time Content also saves marketers significant time that's better invested in strategy. It's no longer necessary to build bulky dynamic content rules, with campaigns that require frequent updating, only to quickly become outdated.

Now, with automation, marketers can ensure the delivery of custom content in real time. Technology like Open Time Content will totally transform the way brands communicate with current and prospective customers, achieving previously unimaginable levels of personalization, relevancy, and engagement that drive measurable results.

To learn more about how Open Time Content could change the way you engage your travel customers, visit emarsys.com/products/open-time-content/.

RESOURCES

https://boomtrain.com/killer-travel-email-marketing-strategy/
https://boomtrain.com/1-the-key-to-marketing-travel-content-its-about-context/
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