

9 INNOVATIVE WAYS

To Increase Your Vacation Rental's Social Presence

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Are you missing the boat?

According to the VRMA, 99% of vacation rental managers fail at the very first opportunity when it comes to social media marketing. Why? Because they behave antisocially. “It’s the ugly truth ... We shout a lot,” a VRMA article shares. “We tell people about what we have to sell. [We say], ‘Look at me!’ ‘Look at my properties!’”¹

It’s time to let go of that approach. **Marketing has evolved and it’s a digital world. The new key to marketing success in vacation rental management lies in starting a two-way conversation, utilizing online tools like social media.** You have to think outside of the box, using social outlets. They are much more influential than you may think.

This eBook contains nine ways to exploit these powerful social avenues. Some apply to specific platforms and others work for every social media channel, but all of them will assist you in getting the most exposure possible for your properties. These avenues will help you to build an identity that will resonate far beyond the bricks and mortar that hold your vacation rentals together.



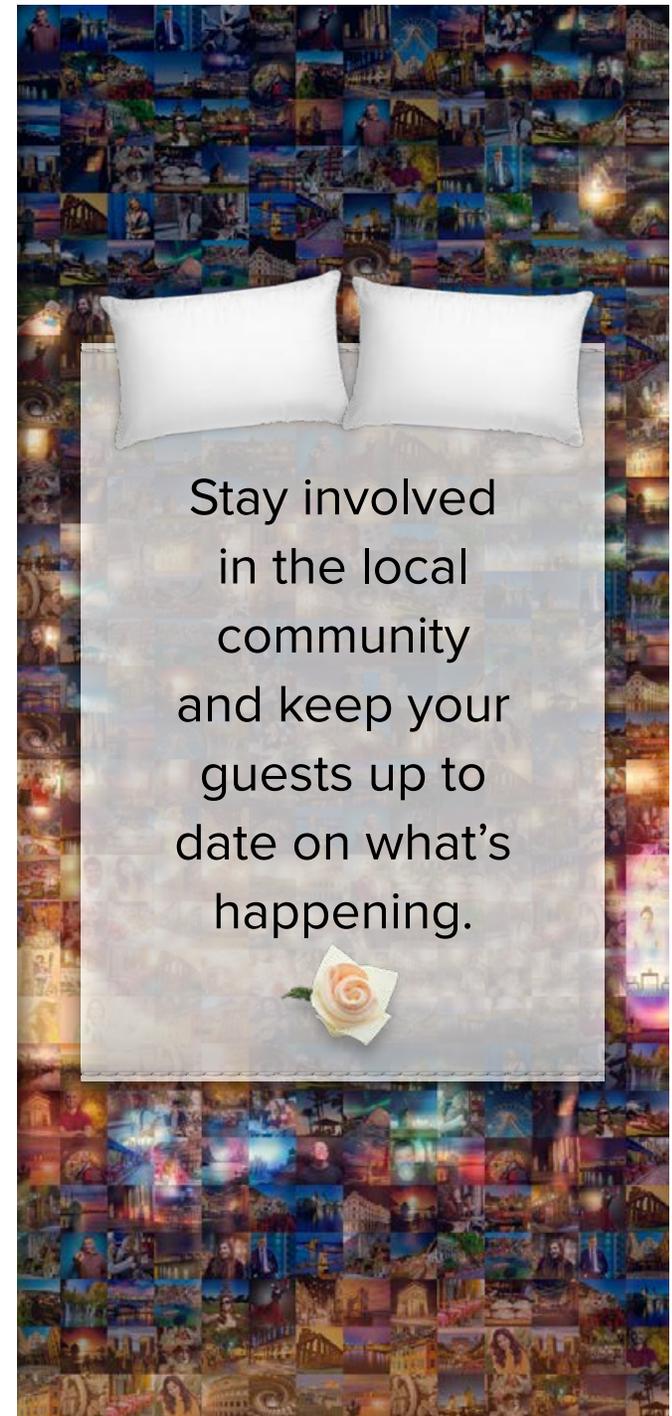


SHARE YOUR DESTINATION.

Start your social journey by making connections with businesses in the area where each property is located. It's more than just a geographic area. It's a village, and every local business is in the same boat. You all want to bring more guests to the area. Supporting local tourism—restaurants, events, attractions and even other properties—is crucial to your success.

Go Local

Make an online connection with local restaurants, attractions and amusements. Leave reviews, follow local businesses and make reciprocal deals with nearby attractions. Not only does it build a stronger business community, it will cause your online communications to ripple outward, leaving a wide wake for tourists to find. While you don't want to give away guests to competing properties, making a connection to those that appeal to a different income level or demographic allows you both to offer a service when your property can't or doesn't meet a potential guest's needs. Providing a different direction shows you're a service-oriented business.

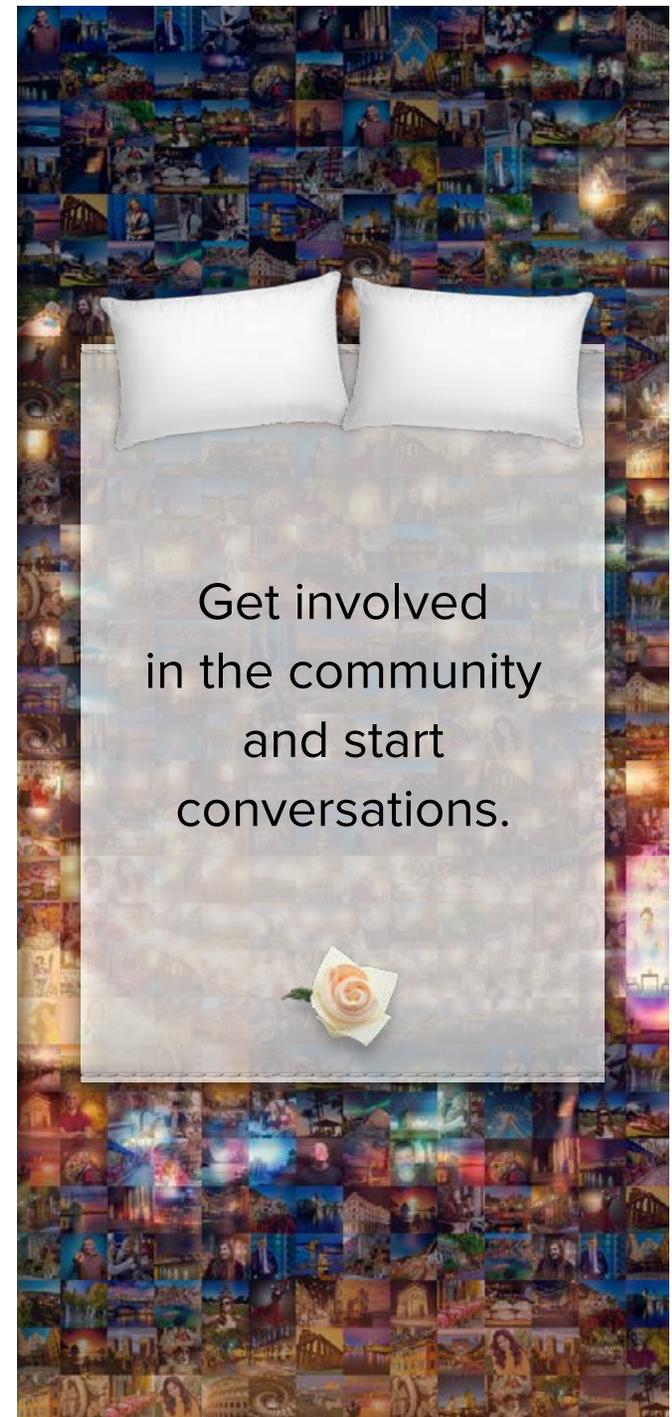




Tout Area Events

No matter where your vacation property rental is located, there is always something happening. Concerts, holidays and local traditions provide an easy impetus to use social media. Talk about who may be making a tour stop in town or bring attention to local bands, performances and venues. Follow local wine tastings and share details about when and where with your followers. If there is a special holiday parade or a local theater that hosts a play's grand opening, be sure your potential guests know about it.

But beyond just retweeting or sharing information, get involved and start conversations. Property managers should try to attend a few local events and review them. Leaving a trail of social breadcrumbs helps to sow the seeds of local identity and puts your property in the limelight as well.





USE THE HASHTAG HIGHWAY.

Hashtags are more than just clever words accompanied by a # sign. They provide a path of keywords that leads prospects to your travel and vacation topics. Think of hashtags as files in a searchable digital filing cabinet. Kigo's **"Dominate Social Media with the Perfect Hashtag"**² lists several tips for finding and using hashtags that are relevant to your target audience. We recommend using a market- or location-based hashtag such as **"#Tahoe,"** or **"#Tahoecabin"** or **"#skiTahoe"** in your post descriptions.

Another important aspect of hashtags is that they give your guests a chance to post feedback and share it with you. If it's positive, it becomes free publicity. If the response is negative, you can demonstrate your customer service abilities by responding to the criticism and turning it into a win. Regardless of the comment, when guests share content and use your hashtag, it provides a link to your business, and that is almost always a good thing. It can bring other potential renters to your social media account to follow your profile and expand your reach.



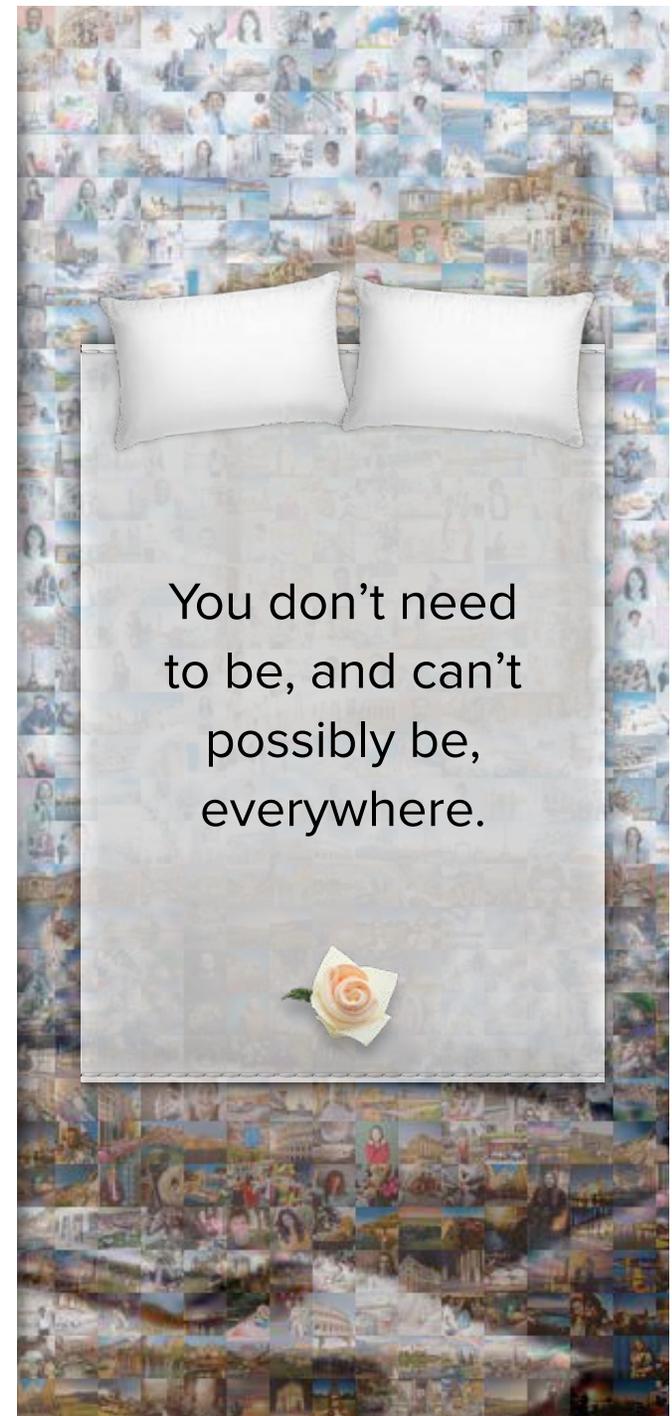


CHOOSE YOUR OWN ROAD.

While social media can be an incredible marketing tool, not everyone can afford to take the high road of hiring a full-time social media coordinator. If you're one of those people who doesn't have time to devote a substantial part of every day to handling your social media accounts (and what vacation rental manager does?), consider limiting your social media strategy to the areas where you can make the biggest impact.

In a **"Business of Holiday Rental"** article, **"5 Mistakes Holiday Home Owners Make"**³, Karen Spencer says: **"You don't need to be, and can't possibly be, everywhere. Instead, choose two to three social media accounts to set up and master. Get to know them well and post regularly."**

In Flipkey's **"Customer Service & Social Media: How Everyone Affects Your Reputation"**⁴ article, author Dave Duff concurs. He notes that you don't need to be on all of the **"big six"** networks if you'd rather spend the time and energy to dominate a few of them. Choose the places your potential guests visit more frequently and create a strong presence where users can count on your information, knowledge and experience to provide them with the most value. Also look at trends where you can capitalize across several platforms, like **#ThrowbackThursday** or **#FollowFriday**.





UPGRADE YOUR BLOG TO FIRST-CLASS.

Done well, a vacation rental marketing blog can elevate your brand to another level, shine a spotlight on your strengths, provide fuel for your other social media efforts and generate more bookings.

Remembering the adage that content is king, keep your blog fresh by updating it regularly with high-quality, engaging content. If you are stumped for ideas for posts, try putting yourself into the mindset of your target audience. What is it that your audience wants to know, beyond the specifics of your property listing? Here are some topics to spark inspiration:

- Local attractions and activities that may be of interest to travelers
- Upcoming local or property-specific events
- The history of your properties, told as stories of interest
- Guest blogs from local business owners that might add a hint of spice to a traveler's stay





FLY HIGHER WITH FACEBOOK.

With **1.71 billion** monthly active users and one in five page views in the U.S. occurring on Facebook, it's currently the second largest website on the planet and a great place to get more exposure.

Increase Exposure to Potential Customers

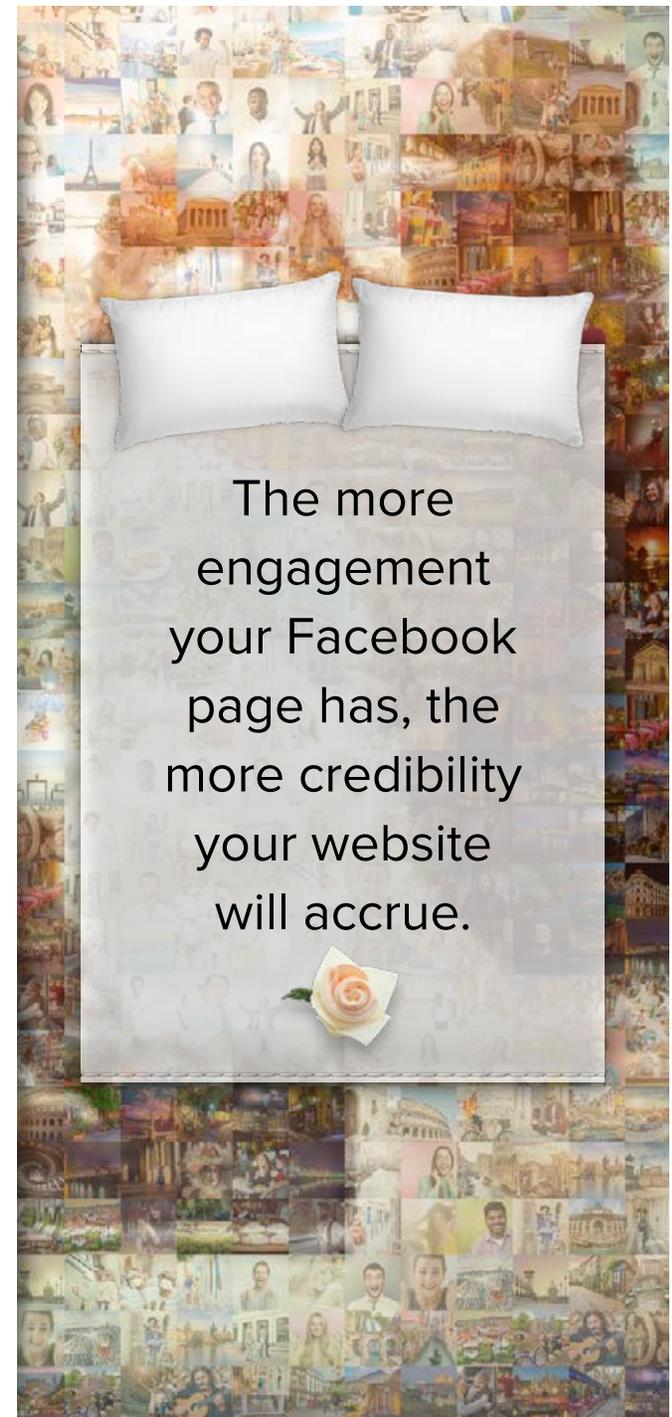
Using a Facebook page to share pictures and relevant information about your vacation rental property will help you make new connections, strengthen existing relationships and generate awareness, free of charge! Every time a user interacts with your content, it gets published on your fans' newsfeeds. So anytime users "like" your page or any of your posts, it could be seen by hundreds or thousands of others.

Every Facebook post is an opportunity to find new potential customers. The more engagement your FB page has, the more credibility your website will accrue. Plus, **80%** of all Facebook users are 18-49 years old, with **76%** being female. So it's likely a huge percentage of your target audience is already using Facebook on a regular basis.*

In addition, Facebook Insights can be used to learn about the demographics and interests of your fan base—if they prefer video posts over photos, survey questions, etc. In short, it will help you understand what kind of content your target audience enjoys.

* All above statistics cited from 8 Reasons to Create a Facebook Page for Your Vacation Rental

<https://www.lodgify.com/blog/create-vacation-rental-facebook-page/>





More Ways to Fly

Build a Community

- Use your business Facebook page to interact with potential and existing customers in a way they're familiar with. On personal pages, people talk about their interests, share what they like and chat with friends. With your business page, you can also share photos, news, fun facts and videos that pertain to your property and the community where it resides. In the process, you'll find you're building an engaging micro-community.

Connect to Facebook Places

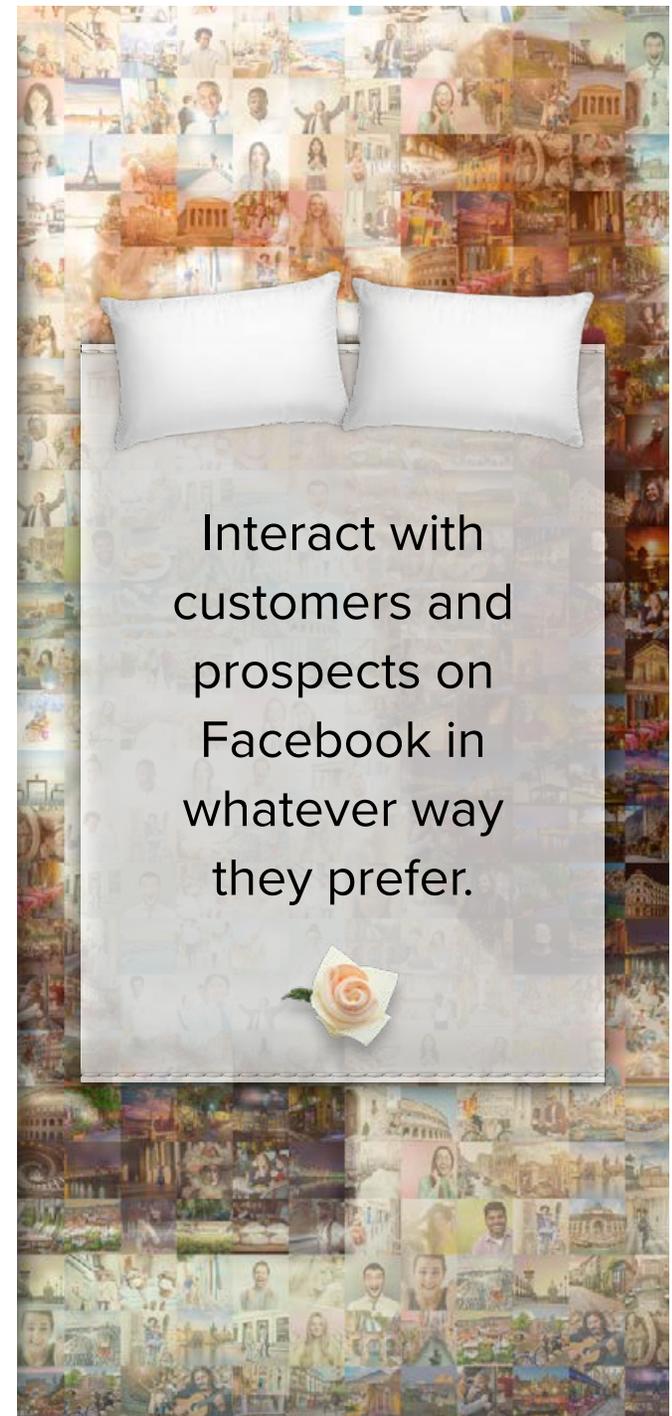
- Users love sharing their locations with friends. Activate Facebook Places so users can check in on your Facebook page. When their update appears in a friend's newsfeed, the friend will be asked if they want to like your page. If you have the right router, you can even set up Facebook Wi-Fi, so they can easily connect to your Wi-Fi without a password or an account. You can also drive traffic to your website with other check-in apps like Swarm and Yelp.

Gauge New Services and Products

- Once you start gaining fans, don't just entertain them with your pictures or posts. Ask for their opinions! Happy customers make the best advocates, and they'll give you great insights you'll be able to use for your business. Ask questions about your amenities, potential property improvements or possible services to add. You will get new ideas while showing your customers that you care about their needs.

Plug Special Deals and Promotions

- A Facebook page serves as a communication channel for vacation rental owners, so you can easily communicate with guests directly. Use your Facebook page to alert customers about special deals, events and promotions. It's easier to maintain than a weekly newsletter or blog, and really easy to update.

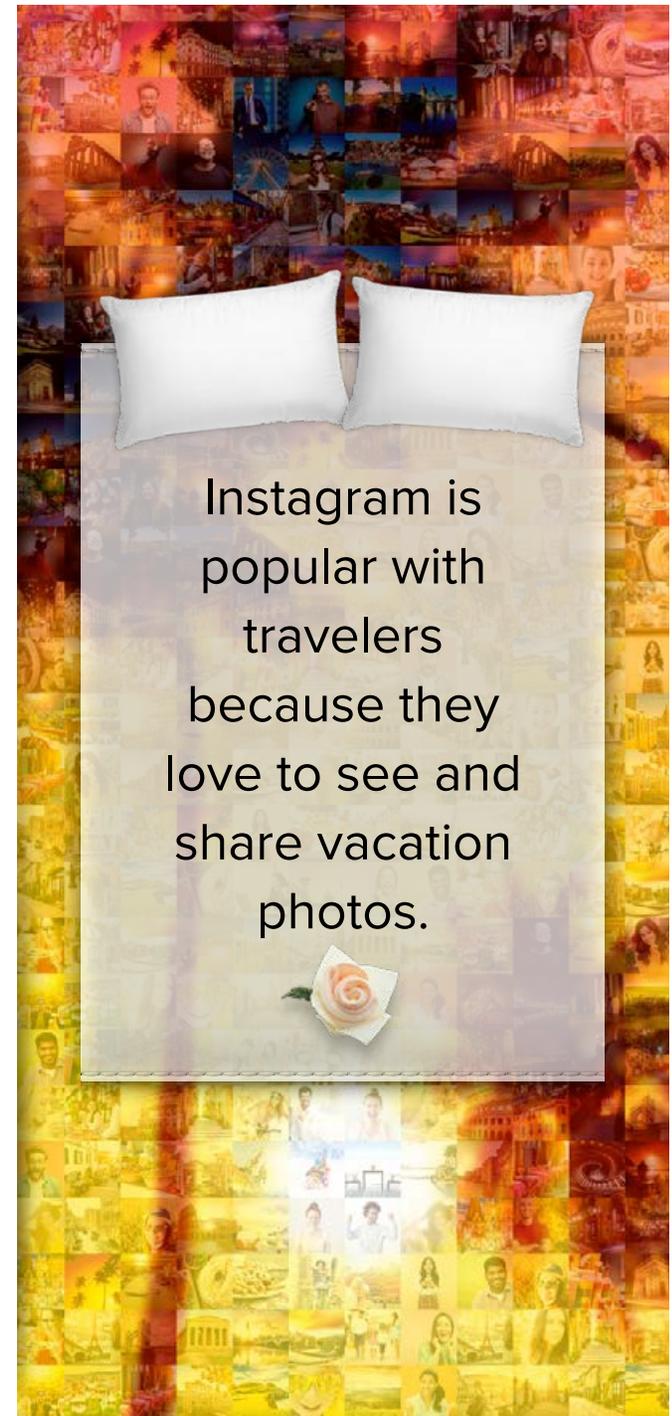




SHARE A SUNSET WITH INSTAGRAM.

While some social media platforms may not resonate with your target audience, Instagram will definitely shine. It boasts **800 million monthly active users who actively post over 95 million⁵** pictures and videos per day. While that's less than a third of Facebook's user base, it's important to note that Instagram is very popular with travelers because they love to see and share vacation photos.

Think of Instagram as your **"visual voice."** It allows you to share a photo and/or video gallery along with thoughtful, conversational descriptions. Much like other social media channels, Instagram allows you to tag users, send posts to tagged users and search for them. It also allows you to easily filter and edit your photos, but remember to stay true to reality. Guests will upload their own photos of your property as well, and you want the two experiences to align. Otherwise, it will appear you're being less than honest.



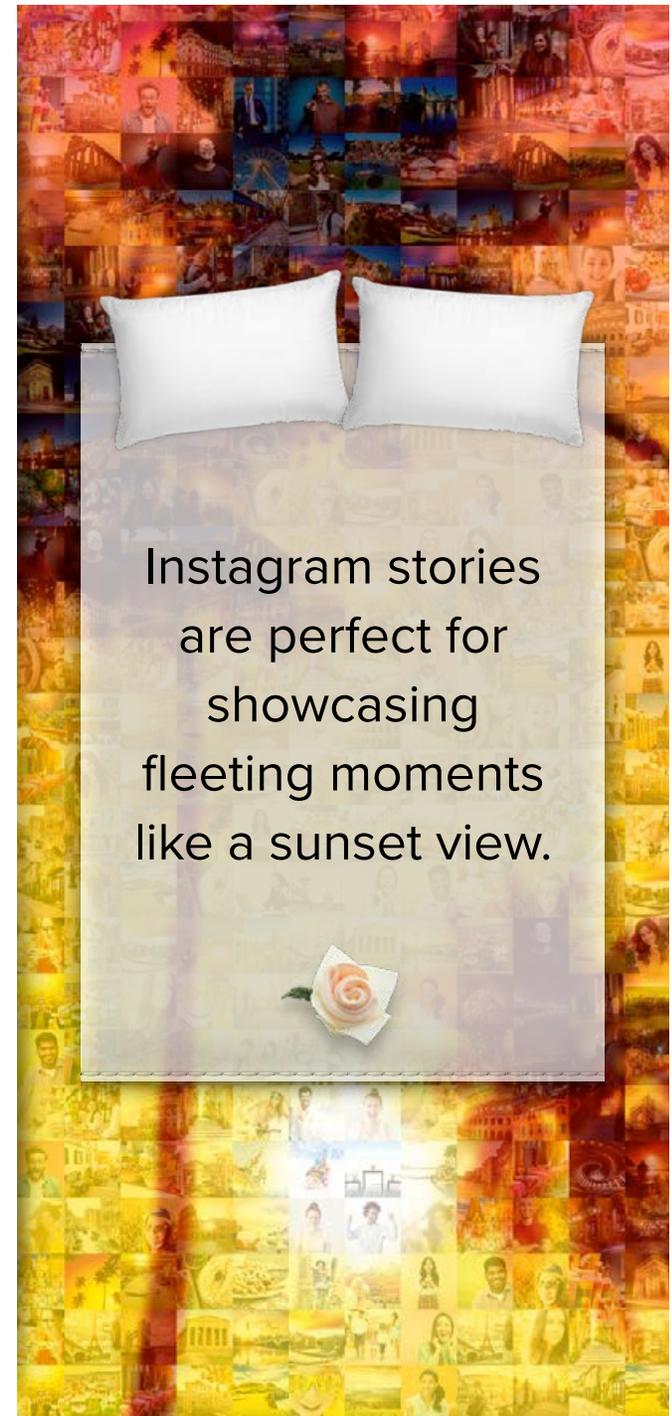
Instagram is popular with travelers because they love to see and share vacation photos.



How to Sell Your Vacation Rentals on Instagram

Kigo's [“Instagram — The Ultimate Vacation Inspiration Destination”](#)⁶ explains, [“Instagram sells vacation rentals as they should be: dream destinations that allow people to live a different life for a week or two. Instagram is where your guests will fall in love with your properties.”](#) To start, we suggest recording a few short (less than 30-second) video clips of your rooms and common areas and upload them to individual posts.

Instagram also has an option called [“Stories”](#) that allows your videos to appear at the top of your audience's home pages, temporarily, and then disappear forever. They are perfect for showcasing fleeting live moments like the sunset view from your lake cabin, a NYC holiday parade or the first snow at your Lake Tahoe ski cabin. Don't forget to add a website link to facilitate inbound traffic.





More Ways to Shine on Instagram

Stay Authentic

- While you can certainly post the same high-resolution pictures that are already displayed on your partner's and your own websites, Instagram appreciates an approach that's less showy. Think less Photoshop and on-the-spot. That said, Instagram is designed to elicit inspiration and emotion through visual content, so make sure the photos you choose paint a compelling portrait of your guest experience. Consider a mix of candid guest photos and videos highlighting important aspects of your properties. You're likely to see an uptick in user engagement.

Include a Call-to-Action

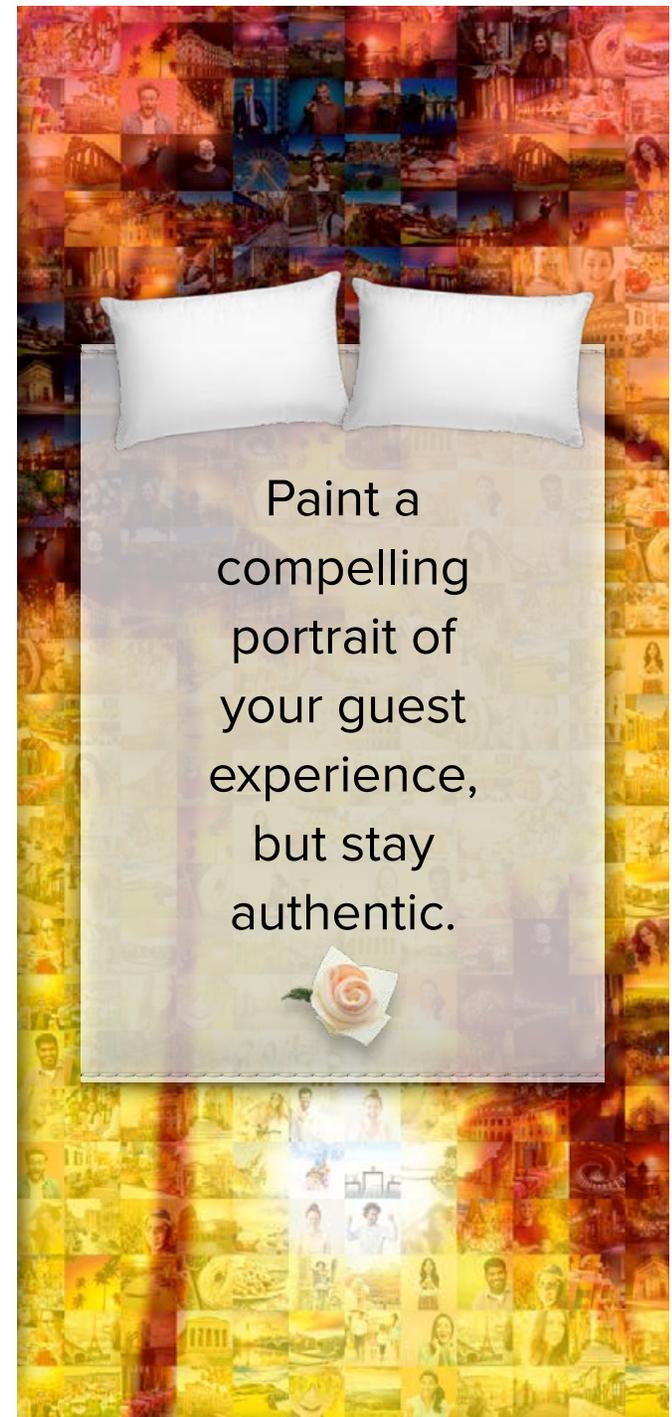
- While Instagram is a photo gallery, it's still a marketing channel. While Instagram posts don't have clickable links, you can include your website address in your post descriptions. It's been proven that engaged users will copy and paste links to their browsers.

Share with Property Owners Too

- If your guests are Instagram users, chances are great they will document their stay and tag your profile. When this happens, ensure you share that Instagram content with your property owner or owners. A great picture of satisfied, happy guests will keep your rental owners more engaged and secure with your management company.

Respond to Comments and Curate Guest Content

- When guests tag your property profiles, it's good practice to respond. Continued guest engagement facilitates loyalty and brand advocacy. Simple responses such as **"Thank you for posting!"** or **"Glad you are having a great time!"** go a long way toward future bookings. If they reply with a pic of their own, don't forget to ask if you can repost their photos on your Instagram pages.





TAP INTO YOUR POWER ON PINTEREST.

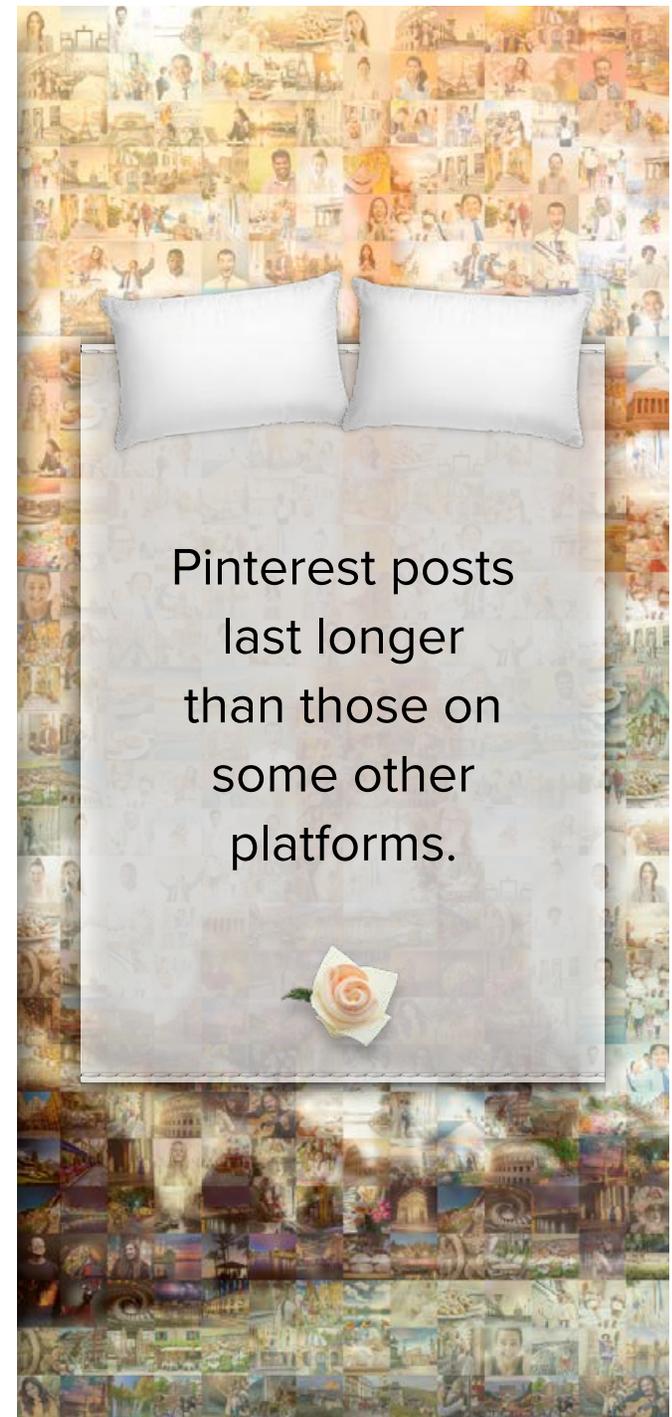
Like Instagram, Pinterest enables you to build visual links, tapping into the power of visual persuasion. While Pinterest may not have the audience that Twitter and Facebook have, it does have several advantages that make it ideal for vacation rental marketing purposes. To start, the majority of Pinterest's **175 million**⁷ users are females, and research indicates that the majority of online searches for vacation rental properties are initiated by females. Better yet, Pinterest posts last longer than those on some other platforms.

Kigo's "**Why You Should Be Using Pinterest Today**"⁸ highlights the longevity of Pinterest posts. It reveals, "One of the main advantages of Pinterest over other social media networks is that these images can link back to your own site. This means it will help to drive large amounts of organic traffic directly to your site. Your posts have a far longer shelf life than those on Facebook or Twitter. Facebook posts have a half-life of around 90 minutes; Twitter, just 24. Pinterest posts have a longevity that cannot be matched by other social media networks. Posts can stay relevant for months on end."

Gaining Interest with Pinterest

Here are some ways to get attention on Pinterest:

- **Add a "Pin It" button to images** – Pinning website photos spreads your message.
- **Build relationships with influencers** – Don't be afraid to reach out to travel gurus.
- **Greet commenters** – Don't let Pinterest's visual style stop you from responding.
- **Start a group board** – Create a space where liked-minded users can talk VR.





HOP ABOARD THE TWITTER TRAIN.

While Twitter might seem too “temporary” to have an effect on your business, it’s where **330 MILLION**⁹ potential guests are posting at a furious pace every month. Many of them are making their travel decisions right now. Providing information they can use to make an informed choice can win over new guests and earn the trust from future ones.

Everyone Eats

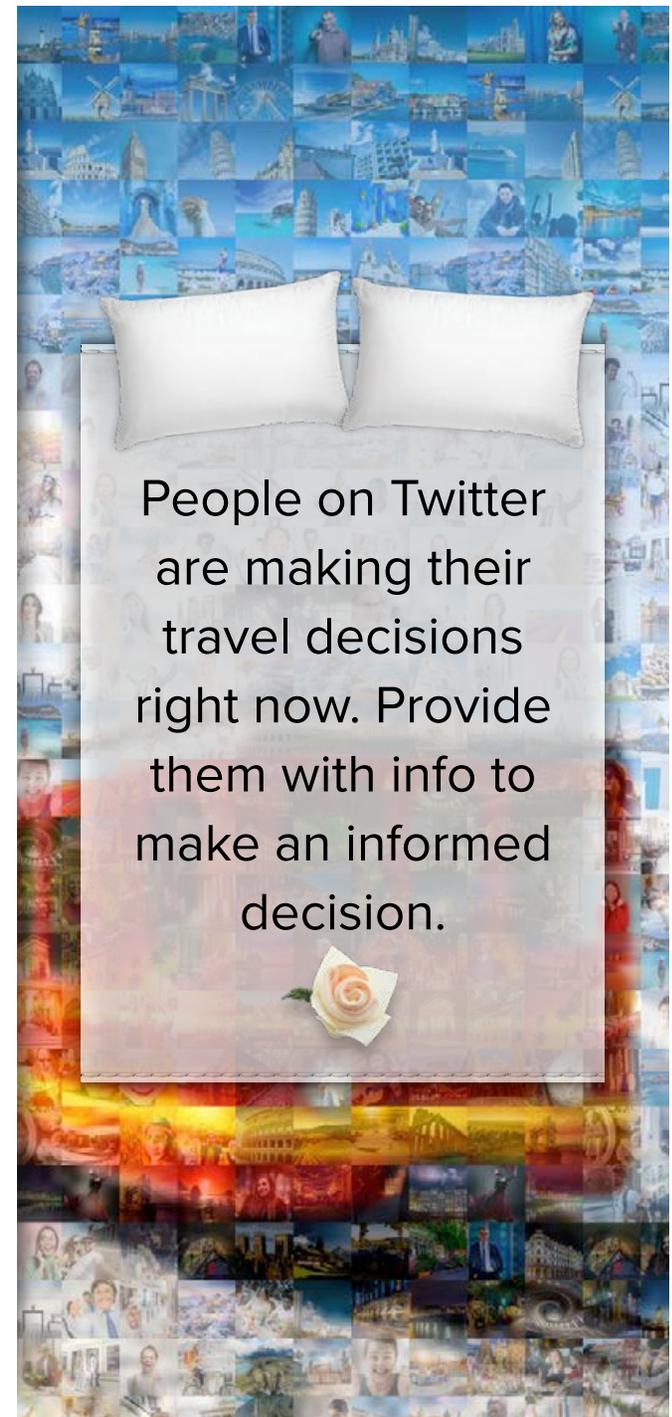
- Everyone loves food and saving money. That’s why spreading the word on popular restaurants piques a lot of traffic. Tweet about different happy hours or coupons while sharing information about restaurants near your rental. Provide information about those that deliver, as well. Approach businesses about adding coupons for patrons who reach out using your social media shares in return for advertising their location.

Get Out

- Every season has its outdoor goings-on. Be sure you are sharing all of the available activities in your area. Use Media Shower to share photos of beaches, hiking trails, fishing spots, water sports, snow skiing and whatever else is popular near your vacation rental property. Sharing beautiful photos of the landscape and scenery for every season will help to attract different kinds of guests.

Don’t Forget to Flaunt It

- Sharing restaurant information and availability is useful, but don’t forget to toot your own horn. Share photos of your rental property and outlying landscapes. Focus on amenities, rooms, beds, views and every aspect of what makes your rental desirable.





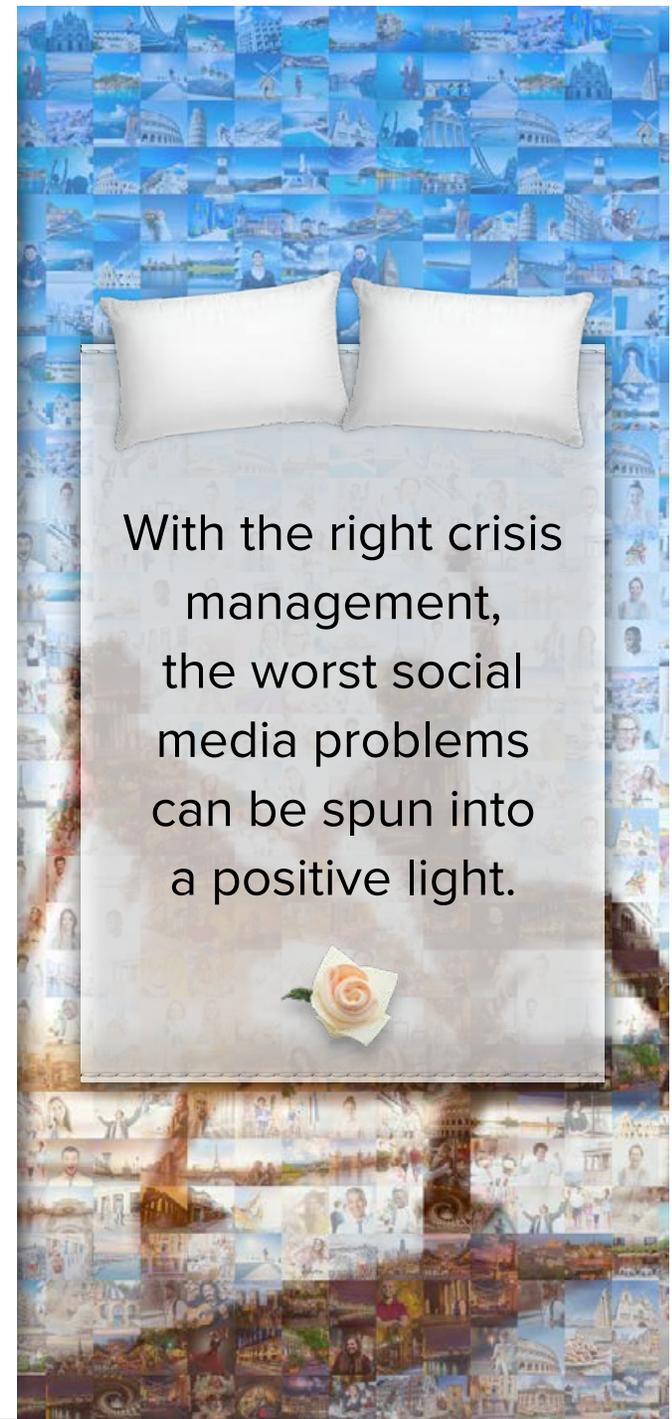
ALWAYS GO TO YOUR HAPPY PLACE.

While putting your vacation rental properties on social media opens up a world of happy possibilities, it also opens the door to the occasional negative social media event. However, understanding that this possibility exists should in no way hamper your enthusiasm for social media marketing.

Kigo's **"Managing a Crisis on Social Media"** has this to say: **"With the right crisis management, you can make sure that even the worst social media problems can be spun into a positive light for your vacation rental business."**¹⁰

Handling any negative feedback on social media, professionally and courteously, will only enhance your reputation and improve guest satisfaction, giving you an added opportunity to stand out from the competition and shine.

First and foremost, don't panic. Put on your customer service hat and do not become defensive. Keep the focus on the customer and inquire into the problem. When you respond, think through your answer carefully and use the same social media platform. Then resolve the issue and follow up. And do it all in the shortest amount of time possible. Leaving a post unanswered for too long can cause even more damage.

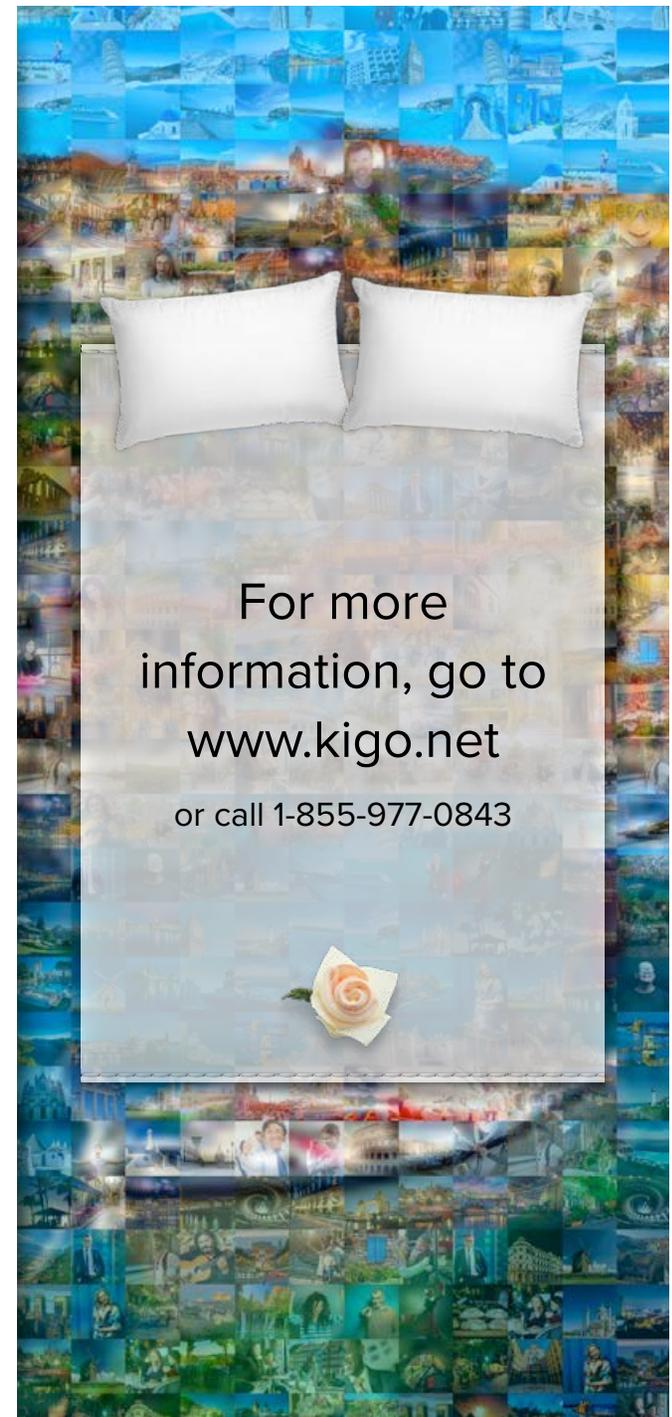


Feedback now means smooth sailing later.

No matter which social media platform you decide to use, from Foursquare to Lodgify, encouraging feedback from guests is a smooth move. After your guests have enjoyed their stay, promote future discounts or rewards for their feedback. You'll build strong relationships, rapport, and eventually, loyalty. Then, they'll pass on the positivity.

Score Big with Kigo

Kigo provides a number of resources to help you effectively market your vacation rental management company. Discover more vacation rental marketing tips by checking out the Kigo blog, our eBooks and our webinars today.



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