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## Mississippi Gulf Coast Online Content Workshop



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A few things as we get started:

- Lot of stuff – so ask questions
- Take notes
- Try things
- Feel free to contact me later

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Our agenda:

- Definitions & Rules of the Road
- Online Advocates and Influencers
- Content Types, Trends and Platforms
- Driving Promotions and Business with Content

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The largest audience in the history of humankind is...

- Not a mass audience
- Using a fully active medium
- Focused and on a mission
- Enjoying a customized user experience

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And it is everywhere, all the time:

- Instant and unlimited feedback
- Content available 24/7
- Follows a moving target
- Comfort in anonymity

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Marketing...

Offline is a message and a response

Started by you

Online is an ongoing conversation

Whether you are in it or not

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## Definition: Branding Online

- Your message
- Responses to that message
- Experiences with your brand
- Your message when something goes wrong
- Sharing and opining



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Definition: Content vs Advertising & PR

Advertising and PR  
statements. They are all  
about attention.

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Definition: Content vs Advertising & PR

Content is a story. It is all about Connection, Inspiration and Motivation

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Definition: User Generated Content (UGC)

Online content created by  
your customers/visitors  
specifically about your  
business or destination

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UGC is powerful:

- Personal
- Opinionated
- Emotional
- Authentic
- But it can be abused

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Definition: Reputation Management

Encouraging the creation of, monitoring, engaging with and utilizing user-generated content to insure a maximum positive impact on your business or organization.

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Definition: Social Network Optimization (SNO)

Making the most of user-generated content across social networks to enhance your brand, business and online reputation

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Inside Baseball on SNO

Online media is analytics-happy  
and this is another attempt to  
create more analytics

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Definition: Influencers

Online content creators with enough followers to have an impact in the marketplace



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Inside Baseball on Influencers

Ad agencies love the idea of influencers, because focus on “audience” makes it seem like “normal” marketing

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The Internet:

Is One Big Influencer

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## An Influencer by the Minute



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## Mississippi Gulf Coast in Conversation



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## MS Gulf Coast Reviews:

- 83,900+ on TripAdvisor
- 96,700+ on Yelp

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## MS Gulf Coast on YouTube:

- “MS Gulf Coast Tourism” – 7,130+
- “MS Gulf Coast Vacation” – 7,780+
- “MS Gulf Coast Hotels” – 7,620+
- “MS Gulf Coast Attractions” – 5,000+
- “MS Gulf Coast Casinos” – 4,900+
- “MS Gulf Coast Shopping” – 5,900+
- “MS Gulf Coast Restaurants” – 3,270+
- “MS Gulf Coast Beaches” – 63,600+

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## “MS Gulf Coast” on Social

- Twitter people – 54+
- #MSGulfCoast on Instagram – 19,400
- Facebook pages – 150+
- Pinterest boards – 150+

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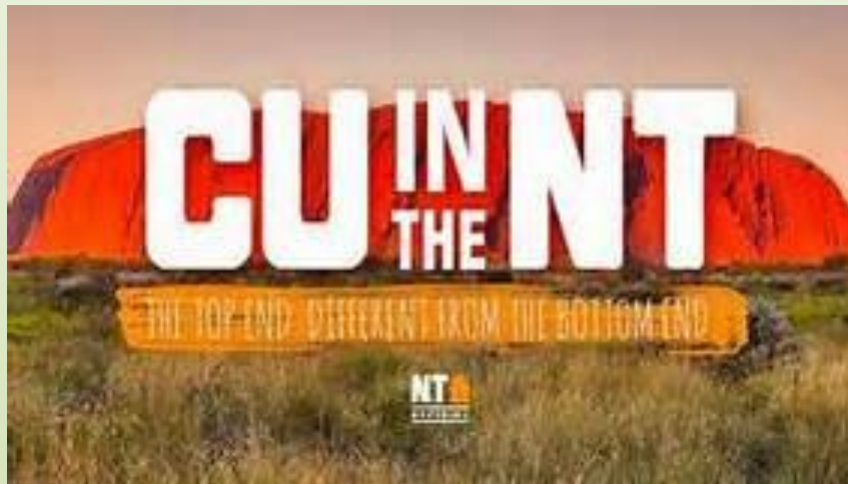
Rules of the Road #1:

Remember that every story is different and so is every audience



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Northern Territories, Australia

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Rules of the Road #2:

Think things through... all the way through.

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“Love and Venezuela”

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Rules of the Road #3:

Always tell the truth

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That's it. We surrender. Winter, you win. Key West anyone?

Due to this ridiculously stupid winter, Ithaca invites you to visit [The Florida Keys](#) this week. Please come back when things thaw out. Really, it's for the birds here now. (Still want to Visit Ithaca? Are you sure? Ok, [click here](#).)

P.S. [Send us a postcard](#).

Site S

## VisitIthaca.COM

The Florida Keys & Key West  
*...come as you are™*

PLACES TO STAY »

THINGS TO DO »

CALENDAR OF EVENTS »

The Florida Keys  
**Key West**  
*Close To Perfect - Far From Normal*

KEY WEST ISLAMORADA MARATHON BIG PINE KEY AND THE LOWER KEYS KEY LARGO

The southernmost city in the continental USA.

Key Largo Islamorada Marathon Big Pine Key and the Lower Keys Key West

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Rules of the Road #4:

Adjust your strategies for this new environment

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The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [ktbs.com/story/34101708/not-the-kind-of-tourism-publicity-you-want](http://ktbs.com/story/34101708/not-the-kind-of-tourism-publicity-you-want). The browser's address bar shows several tabs: 'louisiana cvb nudity instagr', 'Report: Louisiana tourism o', and 'Not the kind of tourism'. The website's navigation bar includes links for HOME, NEWS, WEATHER, SPORTS, COMMUNITY, VIDEO, CONTESTS, and MORE. The main content area features a large advertisement for PAPA JOHN'S 'ULTIMATE MEATS PIZZA \$11 PAN or LARGE' with a phone code 'ULMT11' and an 'ORDER NOW' button. Below the ad is a social media sharing bar with icons for Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Email, Print, and a plus sign, with a '29' next to it. The article title is 'Not the kind of tourism publicity you want' and the main image is a close-up of a hand holding a white smartphone displaying various social media app icons. Below the image, it says 'Posted: Dec 20, 2016 7:14 PM EST' and 'Updated: Dec 20, 2016 7:27 PM EST'. To the right of the article are three vertical advertisements: 'SAVING LIVES' by University Health with a 'WATCH REAL STORIES' button, 'RICK'S PICKS' by KTBS abc featuring a man's portrait, and 'POLITICS' with the text 'Building full of memories to be demolished? Tonight @ 10p'. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, several application icons, and the system tray with the date '2/12/2017' and time '2:15 PM'.



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Rules of the Road #5:

Do it the right way, or go home

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Visit Sweden on Twitter

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Rules of the Road #6:

Online communities are like offline communities – they attract all sorts of people!

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## Online Advocates and Influencers



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Advocates...

Create online content for themselves and friends

Influencers...

Create online content for an audience

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## Who Can Be an Online Advocate?

- A member of your staff
- A visitor
- A customer
- A connected social network
- Partner business
- Destination marketing organizations

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## Who Can Be An Influencer?

- Travel or niche writer or journalist
- Online celebrity
- A blogger or vlogger
- Somebody with an audience of followers
- Content that is easily syndicated and tracked

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Advocate content can be created and uploaded

- Before arrival
- During the visit
- After the visit



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There are four ways to engage potential advocates:

- Ask verbally
- Use marketing tools
- Inspire in your location
- Incentivize

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## Step #1 – How Will You Engage?

Create an online advocate recruitment strategy that is specific to your business

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Asking:

- Helps “filter” the less enthusiastic
- Crucial if you have no fixed, public location
- Great for anything on-the-go
- Difficult to support any one platform or a hashtag

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## Step #2 – Does Your Front Line Staff Engage?

Train your team to listen for cues, ask for content and to help create it.

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## Step #3 – Do You Have the Right Tools?

Use collateral to encourage and engage potential advocates.

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Good Rule of Thumb:

Advocates are going to use the platforms they pick, not the platforms you pick.

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Key advocate marketing tools:

- Signage
- Fused into regular collateral
- Email

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## Step #4 – Do Signage Right

Put them in the right places, and make them the right size.





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Good Rule of Thumb:

Keep URL's and Platforms on signs short and sweet

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Step #5 – Build and use an e-mail list  
(judiciously)



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Good Rule of Thumb:

Don't spam people



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Another Good Rule of Thumb:

Make sure your email links go directly to the pages with your content on them

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## Step #6 – Inspire People

Use iconic experiences, great views, special occasions and “selfie moments” to inspire people to create and immediately upload content.

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Good Rule of Thumb:

Clearly mark the best locations or icons for a photo/video opportunity



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Another Good Rule of Thumb:

Watch your visitors and let them lead you to the undiscovered/unplanned moments and icons



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## Step #7 – Break Out the Selfie Stick (Yuck)

Encourage the best selfie moments where people are look good or entertaining



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## Step #8 – What's the Incentive?

Incentives are a great way to get lots of content in a short amount of time, support one platform in particular, and even launch a promotion (more on that later).

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Good Rule of Thumb:

Make sure your platform of choice and content align well



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A Very, Very, Very Important Rule of Thumb:

Incentivizing reviews on TripAdvisor and Yelp is not allowed and will be penalized



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Step # 9 – How Influential Are You, Really?

Not everybody with an audience is worth your time.

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Meet the Internet's biggest influencer:



His name is Pewdiepie.

He has over 53 million followers on Youtube.

He has a branded game app.

Because: He acts like an idiot while playing video games in front of a camera.

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A Very, Very, Very Important Rule of Thumb:

Influencers are the new “dime a dozen.”

Choose yours based on quality, not quantity



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Good Rule of Thumb:

Travel bloggers and vloggers often make the best influencers given their cost and the quality of their followers

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Another Good Rule of Thumb:

Make sure your agreement with any blogger or vlogger includes a complete entry about your business and permission to use that content to promote yourself.



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## Getting in the Game: Creating Your Own Content



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Step # 10 –

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To Do Any of This Right, You Need a Hashtag:

- Hashtags brand and track
- Keep it simple and short
- You really only need one

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Good Rule of Thumb:

Nothing works better as a hashtag than your business name (old brand slogans work well, too).

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Step # 11 – What Content is Your Content?

You can't do it all, nor should you!

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Social platforms are favored by advocates who create and upload content in destination

Static platforms are favored by advocates who upload content when they return home

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## 5 Types of Content:

- Reviews (you cannot review yourself)
- Videos
- Photos
- Blogs
- Microblogs

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Good Rule of Thumb:

Running out of time? Focus your efforts on just one or two platforms.





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## Feeling Overwhelmed?



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## The Answer is to Prioritize

	Lodging	Experiences	Dining	Retail	DMO's
Top Tier	TripAdvisor OTA Reviews	YouTube Instagram Pinterest	Foodspotting Yelp	Facebook Pinterest	Facebook Twitter Pinterest
Middle Tier	Instagram Facebook YouTube	TripAdvisor Yelp Facebook	YouTube TripAdvisor Instagram Pinterest	Twitter Instagram Tumblr	Bloggers Tumblr YouTube Instagram
Bottom Tier	Bloggers Twitter Tumblr Pinterest	Bloggers Twitter Tumblr	Facebook Twitter Tumblr Bloggers	Yelp Bloggers TripAdvisor	TripAdvisor

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## Step #12 – Make Sure Your Info is Accurate

What's the point of a great review or high ranking if platform users have the wrong contact info?

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Good Rule of Thumb:

Always register for and make use of the free feedback forms and pages on review sites so you can respond.

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## Step #13 – Use Compelling Content to Make Social Successful

Better pictures, funny videos, great messages all lead to more shares, follows and re-tweets.

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Things that Make Social Content More Compelling:

- Authenticity
- Stunning visuals
- Humor
- Compelling call to action

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Facebook Rule of Thumb:

Facebook wants your \$\$\$\$. Better content means you keep your \$\$\$.

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Twitter Rule of Thumb:

Twitter works best when you develop a personality and engage people who tweet about you.



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YouTube Rule of Thumb:

It's not a social network, it's a free video storage site.

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Instagram Rule of Thumb:

If you are planning a social network-based promotion, Instagram is the platform to use.

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Pinterest Rule of Thumb:

The more Pinterest boards, the better.

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## Trending:

- Google Street View
- Bye Bye Vine
- Waze
- Streaming Social Video
- Snap Chat



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## Step #14 – Get Creative



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## Idea #1 – Focus on Videos

- Find them on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram
- Shorter than 5 minutes
- Looping “Vine” videos take more skill
- “Unproduced” videos tend to be most popular
- Add them to your website

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## Idea #2 – Create a Video Series



- Great way to use live streaming video
- You need a hook and enough content
- This requires planning
- Regular stream/release intervals

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## Idea #3 – Create a Soundtrack on Spotify



- Over 40 million subscribers
- Costs under \$120/year to user
- Access to almost every recording, ever
- Build and share multiple play lists



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## Idea #4 – Hijack a Meme



- Memes are culturally viral pieces of content
- Some are oriented to social good
- Selfies are the ultimate Internet mem
- Make sure the meme is relevant to you
- Stay on the same platforms
- Follow the meme's "rules"

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## Idea #5 – Grab Some Content & Use It



- Find it using Google Alerts or your HashTag
- Put it on your website
- Share it on your social networks
- You can even print it out!

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## Idea #6 – Leverage Pop Culture



- Got celebrities, or lookalikes, or anything bizarre?
- Get it on your social networks
- BuzzFeed and HuffingtonPost

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## Idea #7 – Go to Ground



- Geocaching
- Hold a digital photo or video contest
- Digital scavenger hunt

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## Idea #8 – Let the Calendar Guide You

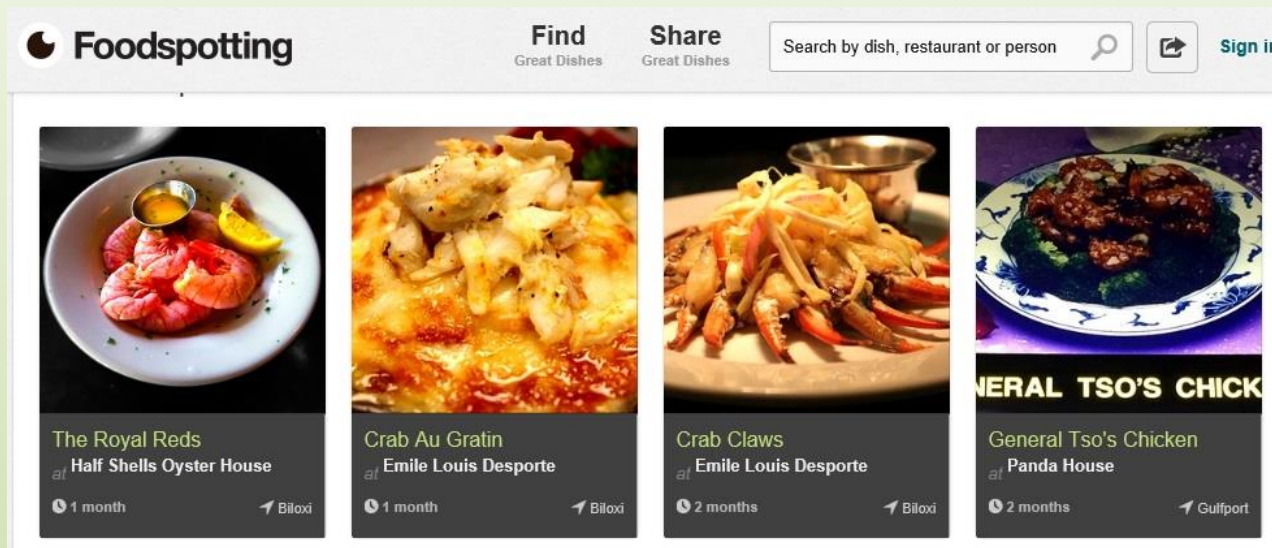


- Align with holidays
- Great for events
- Great for specials and packages

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## Idea #9 – Make People Hungry (and Thirsty)



- Priority idea for food and bev businesses
- “Foodie” platforms – Yelp, Tastemade, Zomato
- Foodies are obsessive when they travel

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## Idea #10 – Find the Millennials



- On the latest tech for EVERYTHING
- Because they need to share EVERYTHING
- With EVERYBODY

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## Idea #11 – Find the Boomers



- Older but active – so very frequent travelers
- Influential with tight social groups
- Particular consumers: appeal to “grown-up” tastes



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## Idea #12 – Make People Laugh



- Humor is very memorable
- iFunny, Funny or Die
- Great contest topic

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## Idea #13 – Go Full Tech Dork



- Oculus – virtual reality content
- Helmet cams
- Drones

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## Idea #14 – Get Weird



- [AtlasObscura.com](http://AtlasObscura.com)
- Overnight promotions
- Attention grabbers

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## Idea #15 – Create a Virtual Focus Group



- It's free and easy to do
- Tally concepts and phrases in the content
- Repeat every few months

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## Idea #16 – Get Romantic



- Tinder, Match.com, Whisper
- Speed dating, date nights
- Romantic nostalgia (anniversaries, engagements, etc.)

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## Idea #17 – Connect as an Industry



- LinkedIn Group
- Multi-business promotions
- Content sharing

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## Idea #18 – Use Content Off Line



- Awesome for rankings
- Use it in advertising

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## Idea #19 – Deal with the Crap



- Respond to bad content
- Don't knuckle under to extortion



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## What to Do About Bad Content:

- If you believe it is fraudulent then ask to have it removed
- Publically respond in a timely and professional manner
- Acknowledge and apologize for mistakes
- Fix the problem

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No Online Extortion:

If any customer demands free service and then threatens to create bad content, say “no”

Trust your fans online!

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Thank you!

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