MICRO-MOMENTS / TRAVEL

Micro-Moments Are Reshaping the Travel Customer Journey



The Red Roof Inn playbook, and what it means for island markets that live and die by flight data.

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THE BACKGROUND

How consumer behavior is shaping travel industry trends

What do people spend more discretionary income on than home improvements, financial investments, or even health-related products?

Travel.

A trip was the largest discretionary purchase last year according to nearly 60% of leisure travelers.

Before making this investment, travelers are taking time to research all the possibilities. Over 40% of travelers say they bounce back and forth between dreaming about and planning their next trip—zooming in on the details for one destination and then zooming out to reconsider all the options again.

Sources

1 Google/Phocuswright, leisure traveler study, base: U.S. leisure travelers, n=930, Oct. 2015.
2 Google/Ipsos Connect, travel playbook omnibus, n=1664, among U.S. travelers 18+, Apr. 2016.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Win the moment of urgency, not the dreaming phase.

Island tourism relies heavily on connecting flights and is vulnerable to weather disruption. Boutique resorts rarely out-spend aggregators like Booking.com or MakeMyTrip while travellers are still dreaming.

So intercept travellers at the exact moment of urgency, when demand is already guaranteed.

THE BACKGROUND

The biggest discretionary buy of the year, and nobody has decided yet.

Google’s research on travel micro-moments shows how open the field still is when travellers start looking. That is where independent hotels burn budget on broad search terms.

60%

of leisure travellers: the trip is their largest discretionary purchase of the year

82%

have not chosen an accommodation provider when research begins

1 in 3

have not even picked a specific destination yet

Sources

1. Think with Google - micro-moments-reshaping-travel-customer-journey-b

STRATEGY & EXECUTION

90,000 passengers are stranded every single day.

Instead of competing for broad vacation keywords, Red Roof Inn focused entirely on the immediate, urgent need of the stranded traveller.

01

Real-time data integration

Track flight delays and cancellations in real time across major travel hubs.

02

Trigger-based search ads

When flights are cancelled at an airport, ads for properties near it fire automatically.

03

Contextual messaging

Copy speaks to the frustration. In essence: “Stranded at the airport? Come stay with us.”

THE RESULTS

Urgency converted where inspiration could not.

+60%

increase in direct bookings across non-branded search campaigns.

Stronger ROI

from concentrating spend only when demand was guaranteed to be high.



By combining **high search intent** with **real-world context**, Red Roof Inn bypassed the long-lead travel research phase and captured immediate conversions.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR ISLAND MARKETS

Stop out-bidding aggregators on “luxury Mauritius resort.”

Mauritius, Réunion and the Seychelles depend on major flight hubs such as Dubai, Johannesburg and Paris, and are occasionally subject to weather-related disruption such as cyclone season. Both conditions create exactly the urgency signal Red Roof Inn monetised.

Independent resorts can capture highly motivated travellers at a fraction of the cost.

THE ISLAND-MARKET TRANSLATION

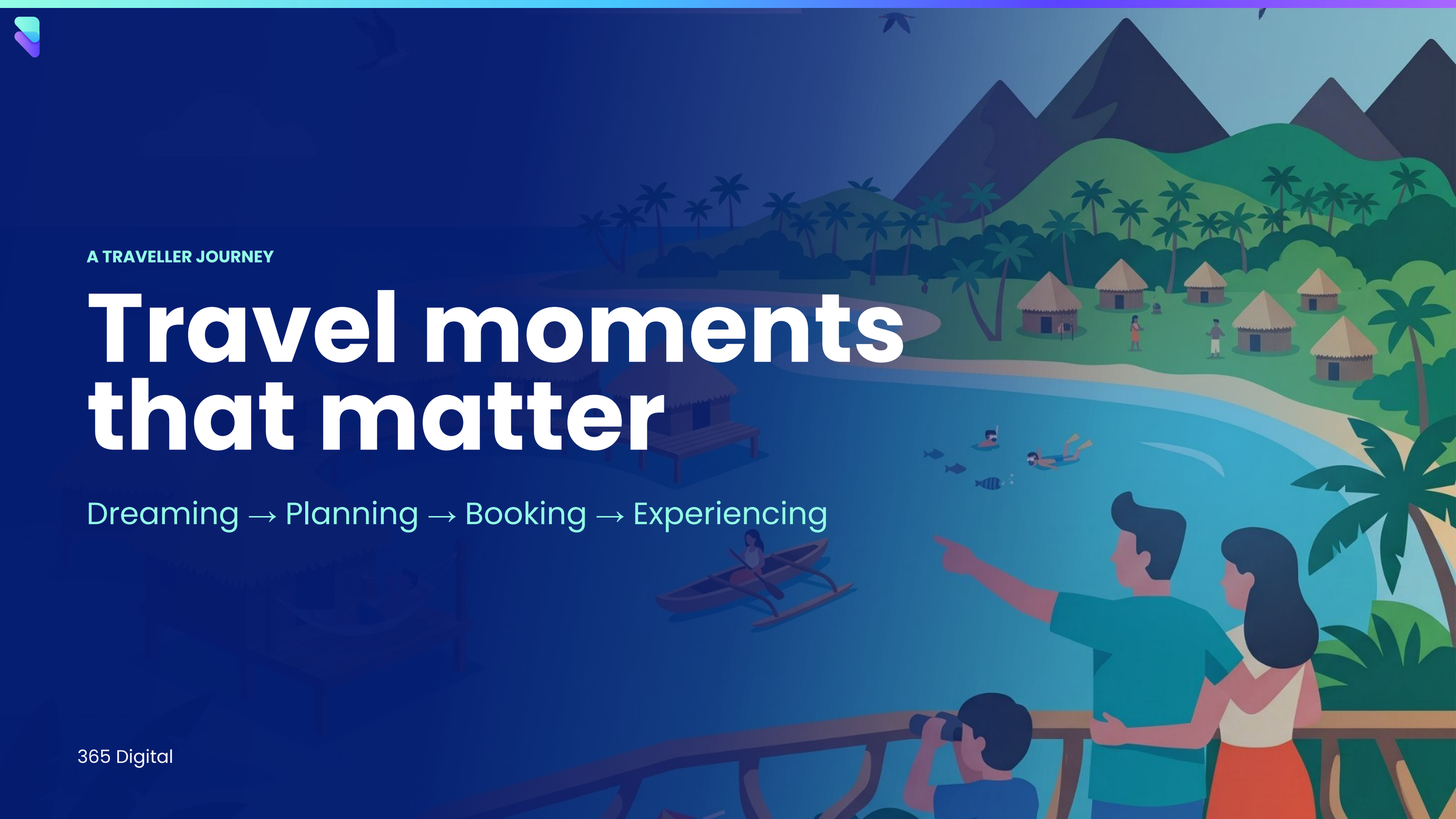
- Target specific transit hubs during known flight delays, reaching travellers whose plans have just broken.
- Own “last-minute booking” keywords when competitors pull ad spend back.
- Write to the moment, not the destination.

Source: Google Ads / Think with Google

A TRAVELLER JOURNEY

Travel moments that matter

Dreaming → Planning → Booking → Experiencing



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TOP TIPS

Creating a travel micro-moment strategy

Why does all of this matter for travel brands?

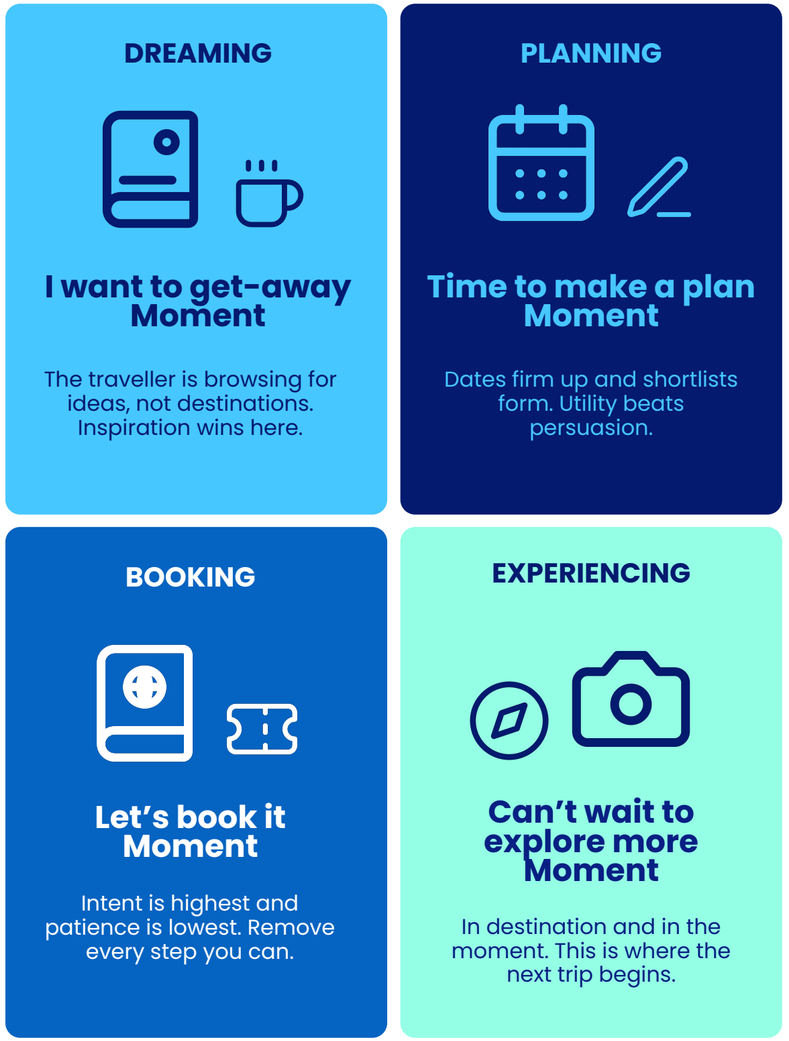
According to the Google/Ipsos Connect, travel playbook, “Seventy-two percent of travelers with smartphones agree that when researching on their smartphones, they look for the most relevant information regardless of the travel company providing the information.” In other words, they're more loyal to their need than to any particular brand.

For travel brands, this means you have to earn (and re-earn) each person’s consideration in every micro-moment they experience. How?

Be there. You can't win if you're not in the game. Identify the micro-moments for travelers that fit your business, then commit to being there to help when they happen.

Be useful. If you want to win the hearts and minds (and business) of travelers, you’ll need to do more than just show up. Be relevant to the person’s need in that moment. Connect them to the inspiration they’re looking for and to the answers they want.

Try mapping out the customer’s path to purchase. What is the traveler’s need that you’re solving for, what is their current situation or context, and how can your brand help?



Source: Google/Ipsos Connect, travel playbook omnibus, n=1,063, among U.S. travelers 18+ who use a smartphone and for whom the statement is applicable.

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