RADAR REPORT #3: TRAVEL

OCTOBER 2023: TRENDS, CASE STUDIES AND INSIGHTS

HOW BRANDS CONNECT WITH CONSUMERS IN CHINA

CREATED BY: RESONANCE

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What is the “Radar Report"?

The resonance “radar report” is a monthly report we distribute to clients, partners, and industry peers. It’s a useful way to see the latest, most interesting brand and platform strategies and new trends as they develop, one case study at a time. The report is free: email title “subscribe” to hello@resonancedigital.com

Radar Report Reviewed Brands/Platforms

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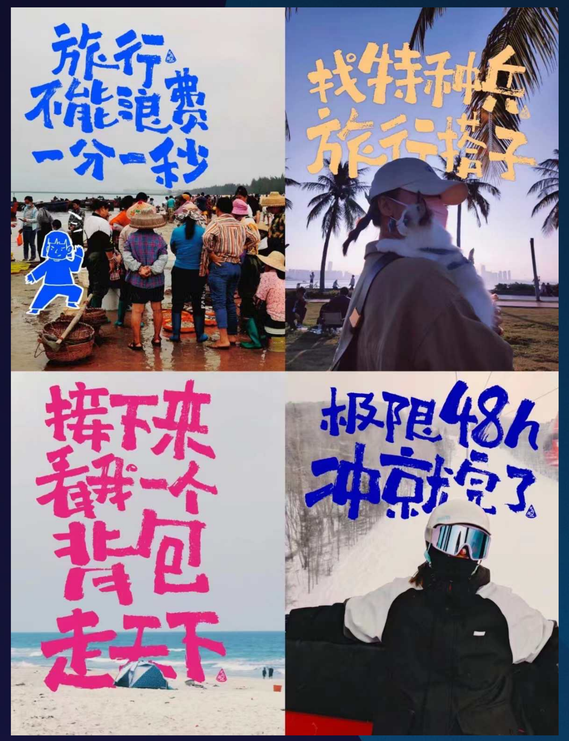
Trends Tourism Industry

Travel Trends: Shorter vacations, focused on local experience and custom experiences



"MILITARY STYLE" TRAVEL
This trend is characterized by young, budget-conscious travelers who meticulously plan their trips to maximize experiences while minimizing costs.

MICRO VACATION
Choosing to take short-term vacations or weekend trips to destinations near residence became a popular alternative to longer trips overseas

LOCALIZATION
Travelers place greater emphasis on regional characteristics, emphasizing experiential aspects of travel and social/cultural dimensions.

CROSS INDUSTRY
The renewed prosperity of China's tourism industry has driven vibrant development of related sectors such as catering, transportation, culture, etc.

“Military-Style”: Hyper efficient travel plans to maximize the value of each trip

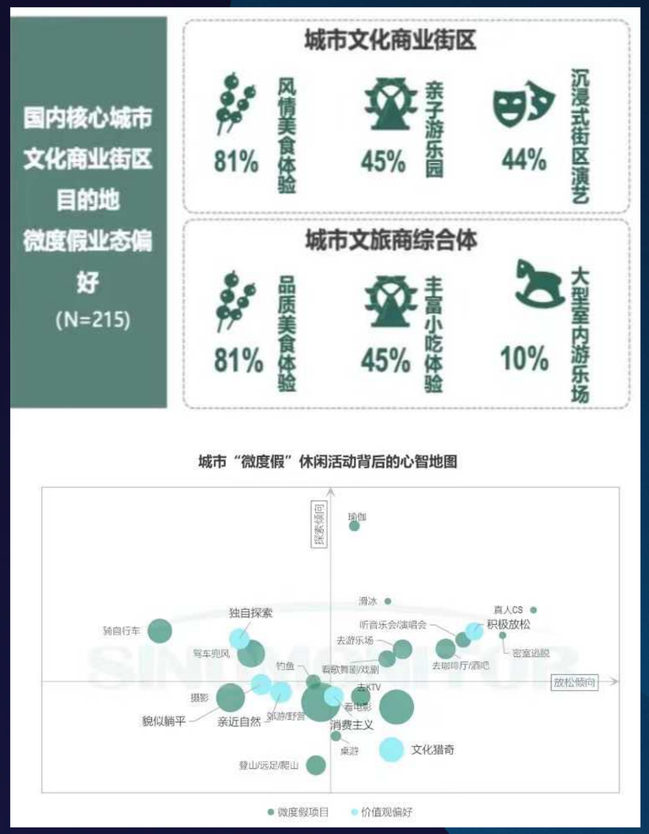
Popular Douyin hashtag #Military-style Travel gained 5.14 billion views

“Check-in" style travel posts are widely popular on RED

In the post-pandemic era, a remarkable travel trend has taken the tourism industry by storm: military-style travel. This trend is all about young, budget-conscious travelers who meticulously plan their trips to get the most out of their experiences while keeping costs down.

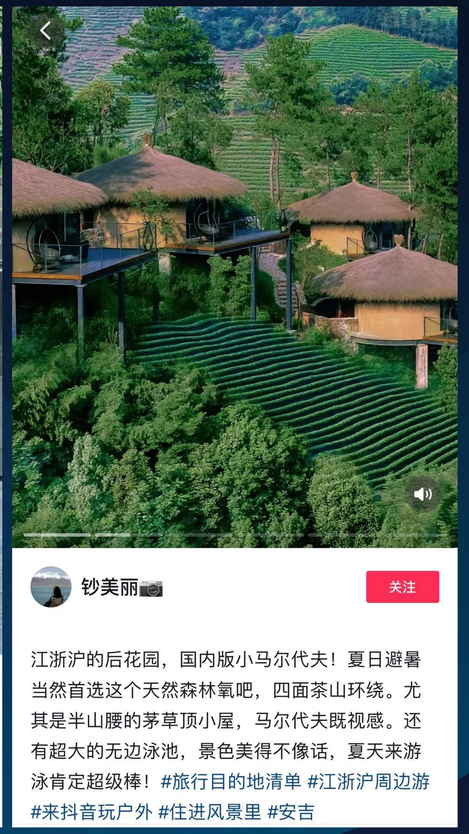
- Efficiency is the name of the game for military-style travel. These travelers dive deep into research, examining destinations, accommodations, and activities to make sure they squeeze every drop of value from their limited resources.
- What sets this trend apart is its heavy reliance on social media. Travelers are eagerly sharing their adventures and check-ins at various destinations, and influencers who embrace this trend are driving even more young travelers to give military-style travel a try.
- This emerging trend is opening exciting opportunities for the travel industry. They can now tailor their services to the needs of these budget-conscious adventurers, a development worth keeping an eye on.

Micro Vacation: Netizens trend towards shorter vacations, closer to home



Data indicates preference for micro-vacations with a wide range of business sectors

Successful integration of micro vacations with the business art ecosystem

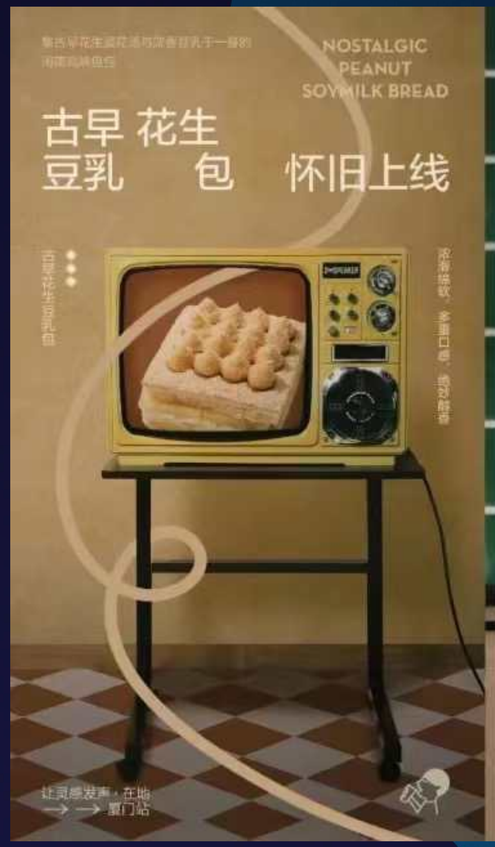


Travel KOLs create high-quality micro vacation content to enhance the appeal of this trend

The travel industry has seen a transformative trend known as "Micro Vacations" take center stage. This trend caters to urban professionals looking for unique and diverse travel experiences. Unlike traditional tourist destinations, Micro Vacations prioritize personalization and blur the lines between leisure and travel.

- Micro vacations seamlessly integrate travel into urban life, revolutionizing the vacationing landscape by providing multifaceted experiences that cater to the evolving needs of today's modern travelers.
- This shift in the travel market emphasizes the importance of personalized, diversified, and high-quality travel experiences. It highlights the significance of work-life balance, offering urban professionals the chance to enjoy a high-quality lifestyle during their vacations.
- As the travel industry continues to evolve, embracing personalization and quality will be essential in meeting the diverse needs of modern travelers.

Localization: Building authentic brand connections in a post-pandemic world



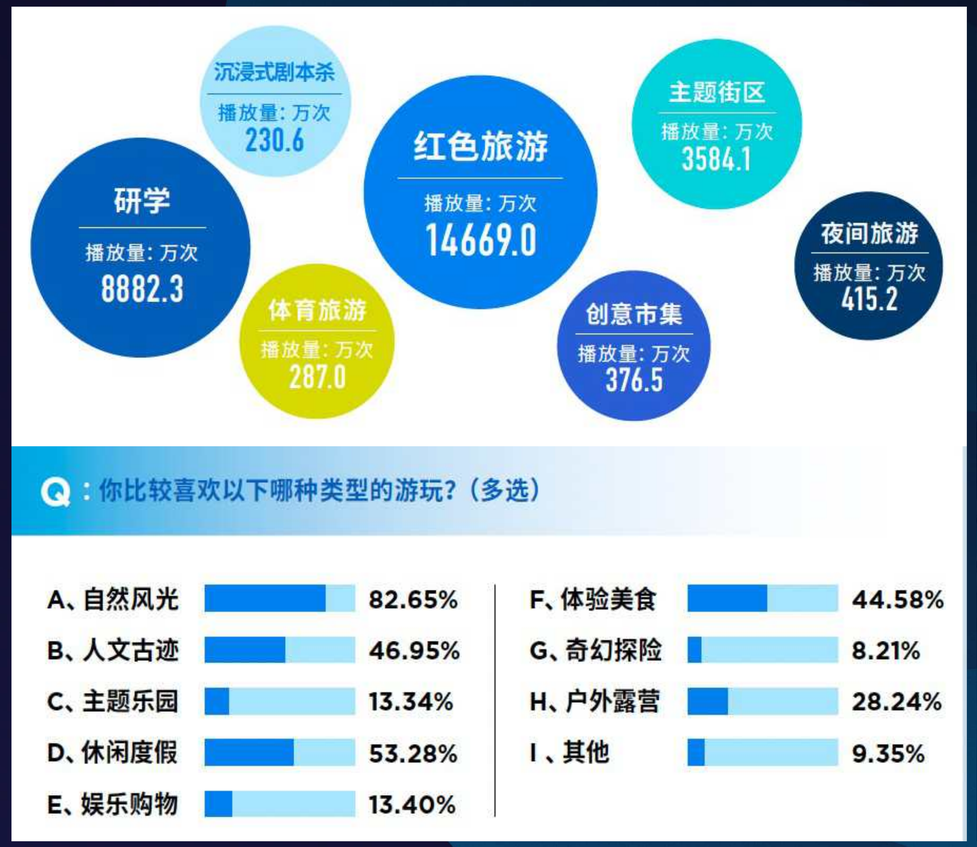
Heatea combined local cuisine from various regions across the country to create localized marketing content, showcased Heatea's commitment to delving into different areas and exploring local cultures

RED's popular citywalk trend partnered with urban events to demonstrate how localized marketing can provide support for local businesses

In the post-pandemic era, brands have shifted their focus in understanding social engagement. They've moved away from primarily emphasizing online activities and have come to appreciate the invaluable impact of offline brand-building activities that involve face-to-face interactions with users.

- This shift has given rise to the buzzword of the year in marketing: "Localization" (在地化). Localization entails brands finely segmenting user groups based on regional characteristics, infusing local culture into their marketing efforts, and at times, even creating unique products tailored to specific regions.
- For instance, Heatea incorporates regional dining concepts, while Red taps into the popular citywalk trend, engaging with community-based audiences to enhance their content reach and underscore cultural values.
- Localization has emerged as a powerful tool that bridges the gap between online and offline experiences, ushering in a new era of brand engagement.

Cross-industries: New wave of tourism emphasizes integration, inclusivity and personalization



Data indicates diverse forms and purposes of travel are on the rise, driving the development of numerous industries

Educational trips with a focus on parent-child bonding gained a significant presence on platform

The tourism industry is undergoing a profound transformation marked by two key concepts: "complexity" and "cross-domain integration." This shift has seen various elements like sports, art, cuisine, and wellness seamlessly blending into travel offerings, reshaping the entire industry.

- This trend is putting the power in the hands of travelers to customize their trips according to their unique interests, transcending the traditional boundaries of travel. It has given rise to a multitude of entertainment options, from music festivals to educational journeys and local markets.
- Today's travelers are on the hunt for personalized and multifaceted experiences. This quest is driving the growth of composite industries, encompassing leisure vacations, cultural exploration, culinary adventures, outdoor escapades, theme parks, and even fantasy journeys.
- Diversified tourism serves as a shining example of the ever-evolving nature of the travel industry. It emphasizes that integration, inclusivity, and personalization are the cornerstones of modern travel, shaping its future in exciting and unpredictable ways.

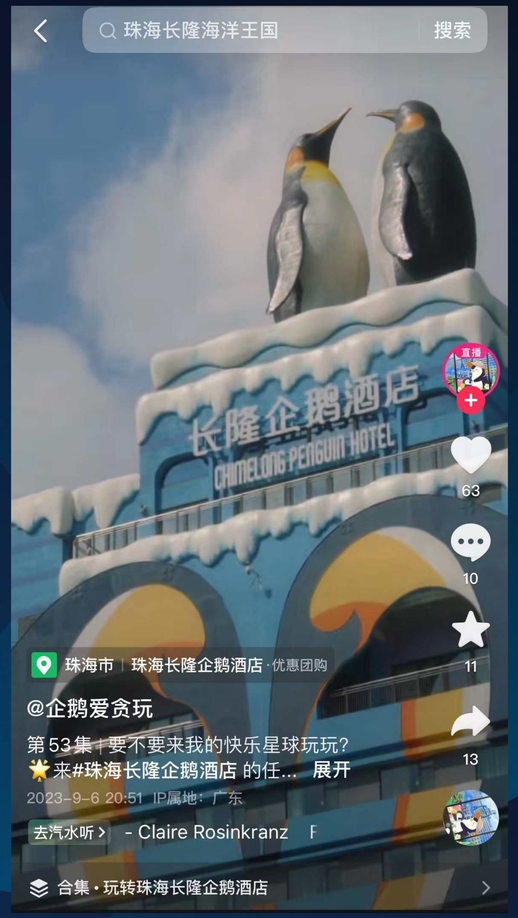
POPULAR TRAVEL TREND INSIGHT TAKEAWAY

TRENDS	KEY METHOD	INSIGHT
MILITARY STYLE	Efficient scheduling and cost-effective budget allocation are employed to accomplish the trip	The heavy reliance on social media in the military-style travel trend highlights the power of digital platforms in shaping modern travel behaviors. Travelers' enthusiastic sharing and influencers' endorsement amplify the trend. For the travel industry, this presents a golden opportunity to customize offerings for budget-conscious travelers.
MICRO VACATION	The travel mode that spreads from city to suburbs provides new travel possibilities for urbanities	Blur the boundaries between tourism and leisure, providing new convenience for busy urban people's demand for travel, stimulating the growth of travel destinations and businesses around city, providing urban people with possibility of enjoying a high-quality lifestyle during holidays.
LOCALIZATION	In-depth research on regional culture, cuisine and others, the attraction of the destination is presented more authoritatively	Segment user groups based on regional characteristics, injecting local culture into marketing activities, and even tailoring unique products for specific regions, providing positive guidance for professional development of the tourism industry, simultaneously open up online and offline influence for travel destinations.
CROSS INDUSTRY	Tourism is integrating with other industries, has the potential to develop into a composite industry	Modern tourism industry is undergoing profound transformation, marked by key concepts of "complexity" and "cross-domain integration," leading to personalized and diversified travel experiences, offering a variety of entertainment options, and highlighting the continuous evolution, integration, inclusivity, and importance of personalization in the modern tourism industry.

Innovative Platform Ideas

Douyin: Comprehensive marketing services for tourism enterprises and consumers

Douyin provided operation of Chang Long Resort matrix-style enterprise accounts



Live streaming and short video formats have brought a significant increase in popularity and sales conversion for travel industry enterprise

Douyin has emerged as a game-changer in the realm of tourism marketing for enterprise accounts. Consider Chang Long Resort, for instance. Douyin has created a comprehensive tourism ecosystem encompassing amusement parks, attractions, and hotels, etc.

- This platform has harnessed a network of Tourism Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), tapping into the dynamics of short videos and capitalizing on the e-commerce livestreaming ecosystem. This strategic approach has led to a remarkable surge in sales for B2B tourism entities.
- What sets Douyin apart is its ability to create an environment that not only supports commercial growth but also seamlessly aligns with the needs of travelers. Collaborations with travel influencers through video content and live streaming facilitate faster and more engaging information dissemination, motivating users to make well-informed travel decisions.
- The significant presence of tourism enterprise accounts on Douyin has made it incredibly convenient for users to make travel-related purchases, resulting in a substantial boost in conversion rates. By leveraging its mature e-commerce expertise and extensive traffic resources in the tourism sector, Douyin has injected new vitality into the industry, driving substantial growth.

Kwai: Travel IP and brand collaboration generate over one billion targeted impressions

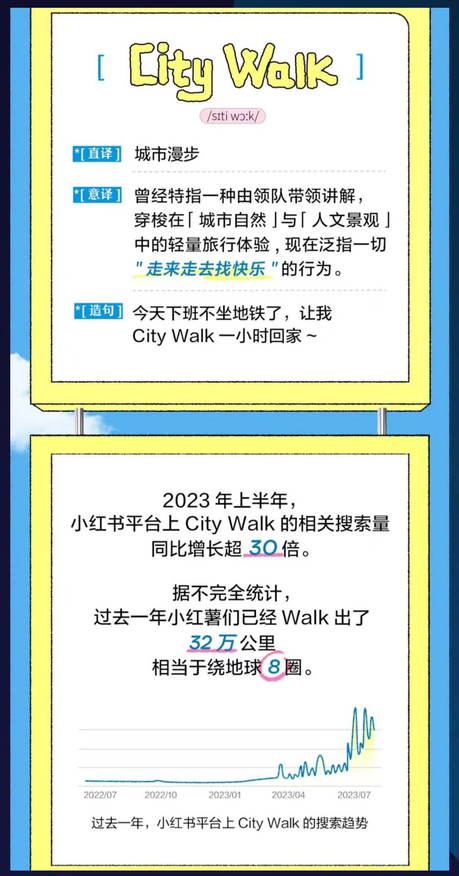
Kwai created the "旅行奇遇记" IP and provided official support to the platform, enhanced the appeal of the travel industry with high-quality destination content and travel KOLs

The high-quality content and popularity of "旅行奇遇记" attracted brand collaborations

Thanks to Kwai's influence, the creation of a travel-themed Intellectual Property (IP) called "旅行奇遇记" has garnered widespread attention, accumulating over one billion high-quality travel content impressions on the platform. This remarkable achievement highlights the significant advantages of using travel IP for both content creation and commercial marketing.

- "旅行奇遇记" captivates its audience with engaging travel content that vividly showcases the appeal of various destinations. It exemplifies how travel IP has the power to deeply resonate with audiences, effectively sparking their desires and passion for travel experiences.
- With its extensive user base, Kwai has offered brands the unique opportunity to integrate their products seamlessly with this IP. For instance, by collaborating with 30 travel influencers, Kwai seamlessly incorporated Lancôme products into travel short videos, generating diverse shopping guidance content. This, in turn, contributed to remarkable sales breakthroughs for the brand during the 618 Shopping Festival.
- This success story underscores the immense potential of travel IP in content creation and demonstrates Kwai's exceptional ability to blend travel content with brand promotion.

Red: The catalyst for emerging travel content marketing



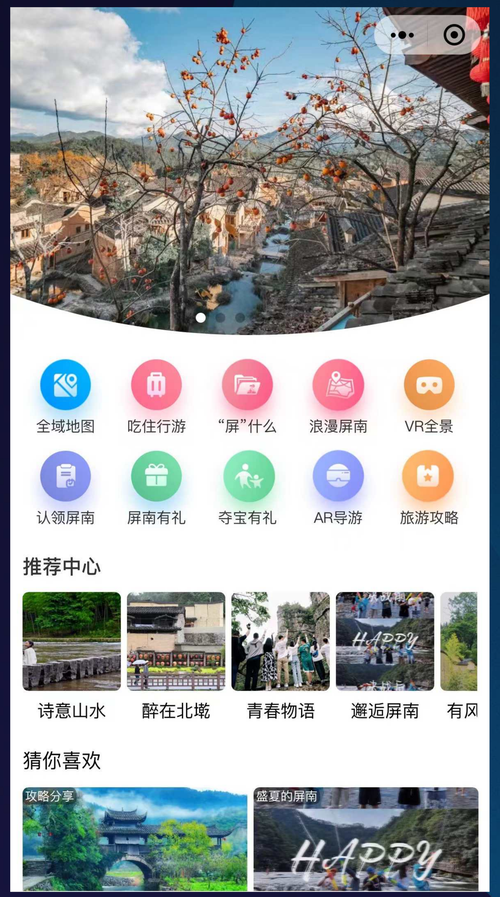
Data and search trends show that "citywalk" became the hottest travel trend this year, with promotions on Red driving its popularity

Red leveraged its extensive young users and community resources to collaborate with local businesses and brands, effectively transforming the platform's social value into business value

Amidst the surge of localized and cross-industry travel trends, Red stands out by tapping into its extensive user community, primarily composed of young users. It plays a pivotal role in propagating these popular trends. Red employs strategic initiatives, like nationwide drinking and food maps, to immerse users in lifestyles that strongly resonate with the younger generation.

- On the business side of things, Red encourages enterprises and brands to participate in these 'maps' activities, effectively connecting them with hotspots and consumer scenes to boost their visibility among young audiences.
- From a consumer perspective, Red ignites the travel passion through a variety of engaging activities, fostering a sense of excitement and adventure.
- Red's success in the tourism industry is rooted in its profound understanding of the ever-evolving preferences of consumers. It recognizes the pivotal role of short video content and travel influencers in shaping travel decisions. By nurturing a mature community ecosystem, Red enhances user convenience, thereby promoting the success of travel businesses in its network.

WeChat Mini Program: Comprehensive platform for tourist services



Mini-program provides a comprehensive platform for tourist services, benefiting tourism bureaus, travel enterprises, and scenic areas alike, ensuring travelers have access to a complete range of travel services

AR and VR technologies enable panoramic presentations of scenic areas, enhancing interactivity and stimulating users' enthusiasm for travel

WeChat mini-programs have emerged as a significant source of active users for the travel industry. According to Tencent Marketing Insights, an impressive 80% of Monthly Active Users (MAU) for Tongcheng-Elong Holdings Limited originate from these mini-programs.

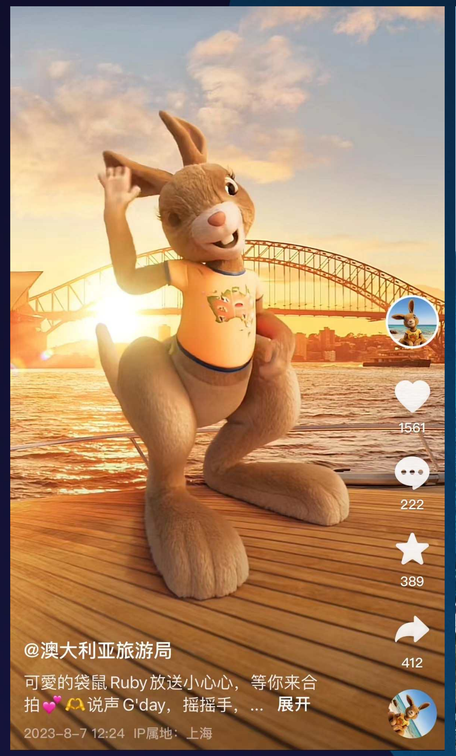
- The appeal of mini-programs lies in their convenience – users can access them without the need to open an additional app. This feature has made them the preferred channel for travel groups, scenic spots, and cultural and tourism bureaus.
- But mini-programs offer more than just convenience. They leverage advanced technology and provide robust interactivity. Many cultural and tourism bureaus and scenic spots have incorporated AR and VR technologies into their mini-programs, creating immersive showcases of their attractions to captivate audiences and encourage travel decisions.
- Additionally, mini-programs, powered by the WeChat ecosystem, hold significant social value. They serve as an effective platform for disseminating travel guides, fostering community engagement, and delivering marketing content to a wide audience.

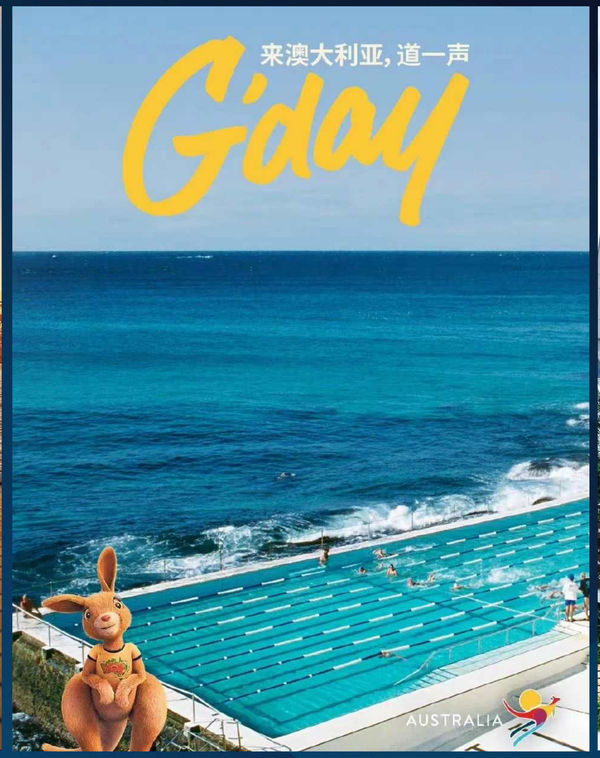
PLATFORM INSIGHT TAKEAWAY

PLATFORM	KEY METHOD	INSIGHT
DOUYIN	Bring matrix-style traffic and resource support to travel industry	Douyin leverages Tourism KOLs, short videos, and e-commerce livestreaming to boost B2B tourism sales, aligning with travelers' needs and significantly boosting conversion rates in the tourism sector.
KWAI	Create a travel IP to showcase appeal of tourism	Kwai's "旅行奇遇记" Travel IP, with over 1 billion impressions, underscores the potency of travel content in marketing, sparking travel passions. Kwai's brand integration, like Lancôme partnering with 30 travel influencers during the 618 Shopping Festival, boosted sales. This success exemplifies the content creation potential of travel IP.
RED	Unlock the potential of regional travel through content marketing	In the era of localized and cross-industry travel trends, Red leverages its large young user community. Initiatives like nationwide food maps immerse users in relatable lifestyles. By engaging users in diverse activities, Red taps into evolving consumer preferences and emphasizes the impact of social media content and travel influencers.
WECHAT MINI PROGRAM	Utilize cutting-edge technology to provide tourists with convenient travel guidance and immersive experiences	WeChat mini-programs are revolutionizing the travel industry, generating a substantial number of Monthly Active Users (MAU) for travel platforms due to their convenience. They also enhance experiences with AR and VR technologies. Moreover, the social value embedded within WeChat makes mini-programs ideal for travel guides, community building, and marketing.

Breakthrough Brand Activity

Australia Tourism: Kangaroo magic powers Australia's tourism in China





“G'day” microfilm showcased the appeal of Australia tourism Wechat feed ads and MP enhanced engagement and conversions from users

Used the kangaroo IP from G'day, and leveraged naked-eye 3D technology to showcase in China's most popular urban, attracted interest in Australian tourism

Centered around the iconic Australian greeting "G'day" and featuring the beloved kangaroo as its ambassador, the Australian Tourism campaign effectively transported viewers to the allure of Australia through an animated microfilm. It harnessed the power of storytelling and interactive marketing to captivate and inspire Chinese tourists.

- In the online sphere, the campaign leveraged the dynamics of Chinese social media by utilizing tailored moments feed ads. The kangaroo played a central role, greeting and engaging with viewers while also providing practical travel guides through a mini-program landing page.
- Offline, the campaign came to life with attention-grabbing 3D advertising screens and immersive installations in Chengdu's Taikoo area. These physical elements created an immersive and memorable brand experience.
- Through this multifaceted strategy, the Australian Tourism Bureau successfully deepened the connection between travelers and the destination. This case study illustrates how creative storytelling, multichannel engagement, and informative content can combine to effectively inspire and convert travelers.

VisitDenmark: Using AI to rewrite the tourism playbook

Short film completely produced by AI was created to inspire users to choose Denmark as their travel destination

VisitDenmark harnessed the power of AI tools and the timeless charm of world-famous paintings to craft a one-of-a-kind advertisement. Using AI, they skillfully constructed a captivating narrative that drew on dialogue from iconic paintings, inviting viewers to embark on a journey to explore the wonders of Denmark.

- In a strategic move, VisitDenmark positioned itself as an "off-the-beaten-path" destination. Recognizing the challenges of overcrowding often associated with popular tourist spots, they sought a fresh perspective to attract travelers to Denmark.
- By delving into the viewpoints of characters within these renowned paintings, they lured tourists with the promise of a unique and immersive experience. This innovative campaign encouraged travelers to look past the usual tourist traps and embrace the true essence of Danish culture and landscapes.
- The creative fusion of art and AI in this campaign showcases the dynamic possibilities within tourism marketing. It illustrates how AI can be harnessed not only for its technical capabilities but also for its ability to spark imagination and curiosity, making it a compelling tool for the industry.

Fujian Tourism: A masterclass in localized destination marketing

Travel and tourism officials created promotional video assets

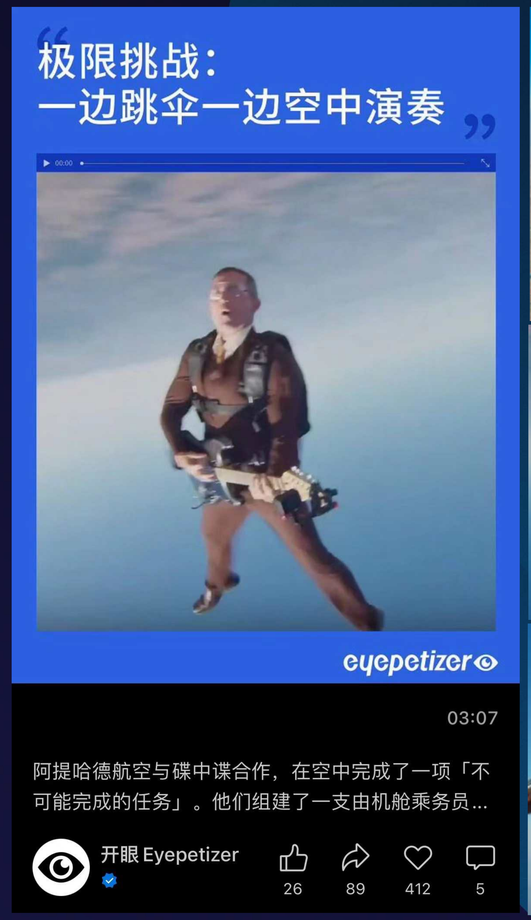
Infusing local culture with trending youth memes to resonate with young audiences

The Fujian Tourism Bureau seized upon the hottest trend in tourism, localization. They recognized the distinctive aspects of Fujian, such as its dialect, cuisine, and climate, and seamlessly integrated these elements into their marketing content. This approach enabled them to create content that truly resonated with travelers seeking authentic experiences.

- To further their efforts, the Fujian Tourism Bureau leveraged the power of social media trends and popular buzzwords related to the Fujian province. This strategic move catered specifically to the preferences of younger audiences and allowed them to cultivate a genuine and vibrant cultural identity for Fujian's tourism. In doing so, they effectively showcased the province's unique personality and cultural features.

- The success story of the Fujian Tourism Bureau serves as a guiding light for the travel industry, underlining the potent combination of localization and social media trends in destination marketing. By embracing Fujian's rich cultural heritage and harnessing the appeal of youth-focused content, they carved out a niche that resonated with travelers of all ages.

Etihad Airways: Daring skydiving orchestra collaboration with Hollywood



Highlighting the professionalism and adventurous spirit of the cabin crew through their parachute performance has served as a positive promotional tool for the brand

The collaboration with "Mission: Impossible" expanded the airline's promotional influence

Etihad Airways embarked on a bold journey through a partnership with Paramount Pictures, resulting in a collaboration that truly raised the stakes. They crafted a heart-pounding short film capturing an adrenaline-inducing moment: crew members leaping from 30,000 feet and guiding an airborne orchestra, showcasing the exceptional professionalism of Etihad Airways.

- This jaw-dropping parachute performance not only celebrated their collaboration with the "Mission: Impossible" film franchise but also embodied the airline's spirit and determination.
- This exhilarating feat underscored their commitment to constant evolution and delivering exceptional experiences to their passengers. The collaboration with Paramount Pictures transformed Etihad Airways into a symbol of aspiration, pushing the boundaries and redefining what is possible in the airline industry.

Spring Airlines: Capturing the second dimension with Aqiu IP

The Spring Airlines second dimension IP interacted with young users at ChinaJoy

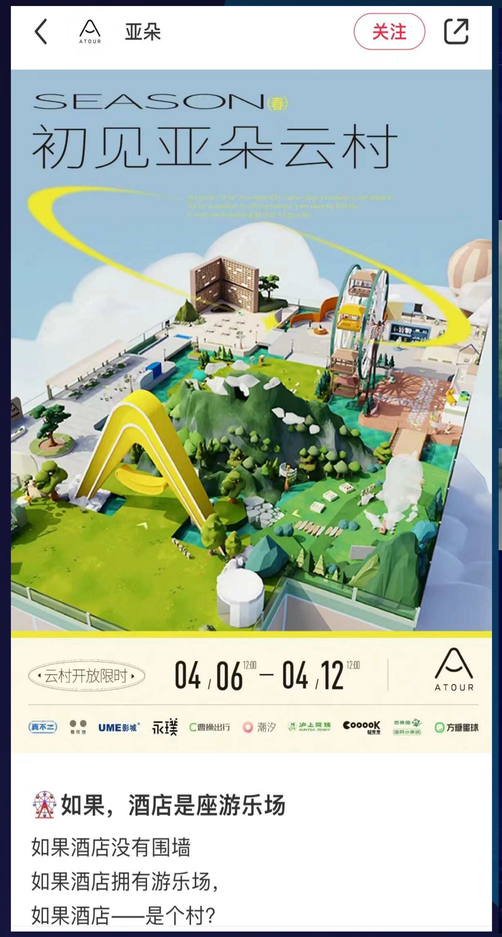
By offering flight ticket rewards as incentives, encouraged users to participate and facilitated closer communication between brand and the youth

Spring Airlines made a groundbreaking move in the Chinese civil aviation industry by venturing into the realm of second dimension culture. They introduced Aqiu, the first-ever second dimension IP character among domestic airlines. This innovative step aimed to forge a closer connection between the airline and young travelers, marking a significant leap in brand rejuvenation.

- At this year's ChinaJoy, a prominent event in the second-dimension universe, Spring Airlines brought their IP character to life through real-life cosplayers, captivating a wide audience. They enhanced the experience with engaging activities like cosplay fashion shows, Rap performances, and in-flight fitness challenges, all infused with Spring Airlines' distinctive aviation flair.

- Aqiu serves as a symbol of Spring Airlines' bold commitment to brand innovation and its dedication to bridging the gap with passengers. The seamless integration into the world of second dimension culture has made Spring Airlines more attractive to young travelers, playing a pivotal role in the airline's rejuvenation. It also reflects their corporate ethos of embracing novelty and staying at the forefront of trends.

Atour Hotels: Pioneering the exploration of the metaverse in the Chinese hotel industry



Atour Hotel created a metaverse version to digitally showcase the hotel's environment, facilities and services

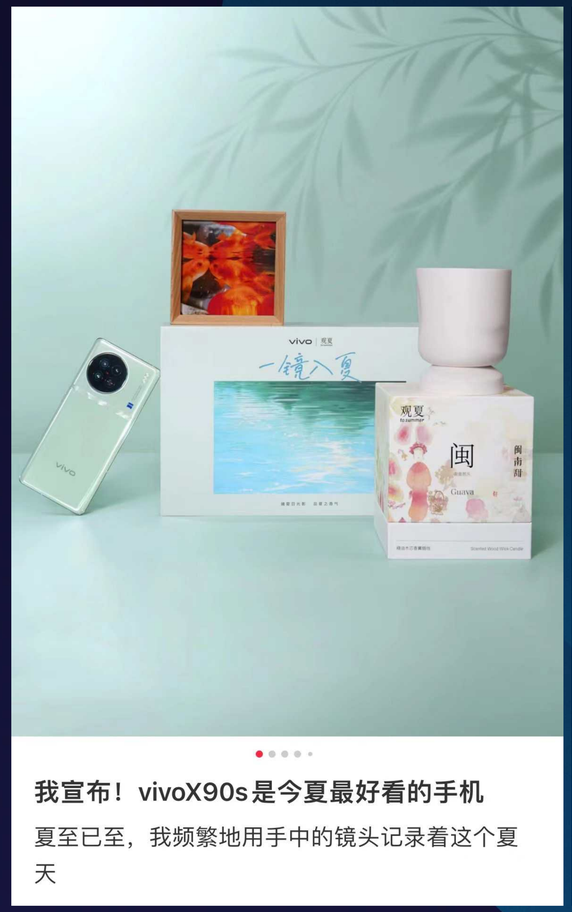
The metaverse space highlights the brand's proactive efforts in the digitalization trend of travel

Atour Hotel has positioned itself as a pioneer in the Chinese hotel industry's exploration of the metaverse. Through collaboration with metaverse operation experts, Atour has introduced "Atour Space," an online virtual experiential platform that allows users to take a multidimensional tour of their hotels. Using cutting-edge technology, users can navigate this virtual space, gaining insights into the hotel's environment and amenities, effectively showcasing the accommodations and services on offer.

- Amid the flourishing trends in the travel industry, immersive metaverse experiences are gaining significant popularity. Atour's metaverse space empowers users to efficiently comprehend the hotel through advanced technology, igniting their desire to book a stay.

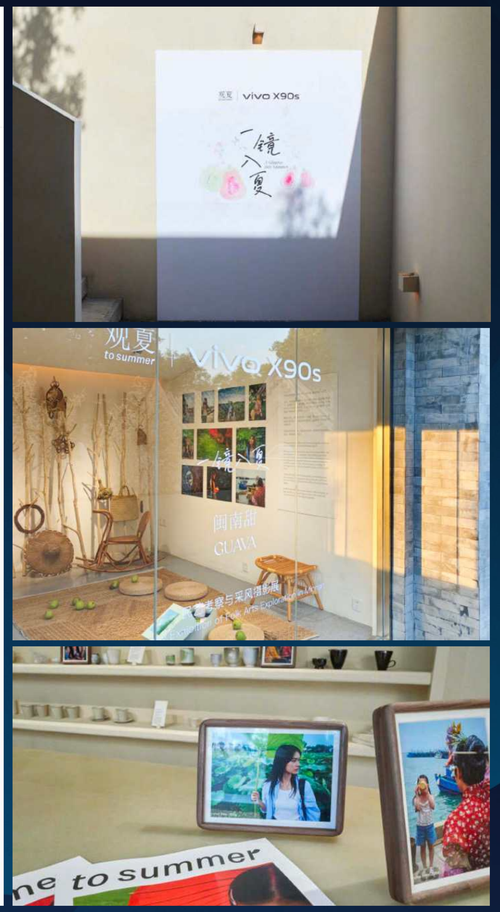
- The immersive nature of the metaverse creates a distinctive and captivating environment that encourages potential guests to thoroughly explore what Atour Hotel has to offer. This forward-thinking approach aligns perfectly with the broader industry shift towards technology-driven solutions and enhanced consumer engagement.

Vivo: Cultural stories blending tech and tradition with Guanxia



Officially announce co-branding and infuse local culture into assets

Create brand product as a travel record-keeper, making it highly popular for capturing travel experiences



Offline events enhance the interactivity and visibility of the co-branding

Vivo's strategic co-branding venture with Guanxia showcases their deep appreciation of the profound historical and cultural significance of the Minnan region. During the peak summer travel season, they collaborated to infuse local elements such as clothing and fruits into their co-created marketing content, seamlessly blending the rich cultural tapestry of the region.

- This collaboration provided Vivo with an opportunity to introduce limited-edition gift boxes, perfectly aligned with their new Vivo X90s series, and echoing the fragrant essence of Guanxia. This thoughtful integration not only imbued each captured moment with emotion and storytelling but also tapped into the captivating human and narrative aspects of Minnan culture.

- Amidst the fervor of current travel trends, this exploration of cultural content not only enriches the brand but also aligns seamlessly with the evolving landscape of experiential marketing. Vivo's partnership with Guanxia stands as a compelling example of the power of cultural storytelling in crafting authentic and resonant brand narratives.

BRAND INSIGHT TAKEAWAY

BRANDS	KEY METHOD	INSIGHT
AUSTRALIA TOURISM	Feature kangaroo and animated microfilms	Create culturally-rich travel assetes, integrate them with online ads and interactive offline installations for an IMC campaign.
VISIT DENMARK	AI generated short assets	AI crafted a narrative dialogue from famous artworks to welcome exploration of Denmark. The fusion of art and AI showcases creative possibilities in tourism marketing, emphasizing the power of technology to ignite curiosity and imagination.
FUJIAN TOURISM	Localized travel assests	Leveraged social media trends and buzzwords, especially targeting younger audiences, demonstrated the impact of localization and social media trends in destination marketing.
ETIHAD AIRWAYS	Co-branding and challending video assets	Daring advertisement creativity showcased Etihad's commitment to innovation and exceptional passenger experiences, redefining possibilities in the airline industry.
SPRING AIRLINES	Second dimension IP and brand rejuvenation	Made a pioneering move in the Chinese civil aviation industry by introducing the first domestic airline second-dimension IP character to connect with younger travelers and rejuvenate the brand.
ATOUR HOTEL	Create metaverse space	Created an Metaverse immersive virtual platform allowing users to explore their hotels from various perspectives, efficiently informs potential guests, igniting their desire to book. Align with the tech-driven industry shift towards enhanced consumer engagement.
VIVO	Storytelling co-branding	Vivo co-branding with Guanxia cultural exploration enhances brand narratives and aligns with experiential marketing trends, highlighting the potency of cultural storytelling in brand promotion.

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