

Passport Online Releases 2018 Year-End Digital Report Card 44 million shopping sessions in 2018

Beaverton, OR (March 5, 2019) – Passport Online Inc., the industry’s leader in travel agency digital technology, completed an analysis of the travel agency community activity across all digital channels in 2018. Consumer shopping sessions on Passport Online customer agency websites topped 44 million in 2018. Engagement on social media channels skyrocketed with more than a 100% increase in comments and shares over 2017. Overall the travel agency community embraced digital tools and their consumers responded.

“Our travel agency customers are enticing their clients to start shopping on their digital channels, with increasing shopping sessions, email delivery and click through activities on social media,” said Jeanne Colombo, Vice President, Strategic Partnerships, Passport Online. “Every call to action through our digital channels directs the consumer back to their travel professional to complete the sale. Our role is to drive interest and shopping and then we know our travel agency customers close the sale with a personal touch.”

Passport Online is in the unique position to monitor consumer interaction with their travel agency as the company helps more than 7,500 travel agencies create, expand and diversify their digital footprint through websites, social media and email marketing and works with more than 30,000 agents in partnership with many of the industry consortia and host agencies as well as hundreds of independent agencies.

Of significant note in the 2018 data was the click through rate to supplier offers on agency websites powered by Passport. The average click through rate was 10.9 %, which is significantly higher than the industry norm. “This statistic shows the level of consumer interest in offers provided by their personal travel agency and the loyalty of consumers to view trusted offers provided by their travel agency,” said Colombo.

The use of digital booking tools to complete b-to-b transactions also rose significantly among Passport Online booking engine customers in 2018. For the full year, bookings generated on the company's Tandem cruise booking engine were up 25% year-over-year.

For the email marketing channels Passport Online supports, the average agency customer database spiked in 2018 from an average of 1,000 names to just under 4,000 names on average per agency. Email communication between agents and their clients continues to be the number one marketing method, according to the recently released Phocuswright U.S. Travel Agency Distribution Landscape Study.

Passport's analysis of social media engagement for its ESP Facebook Posting service customers shows a significant spike in activity. By the end of 2018 our ESP services were helping to power more than 1,500 travel agency Facebook business pages and our customers saw a 170% increase in consumer comments on their FB pages. They saw a 110% increase in shares and nearly 75% increase in clicks. According to year end statistics reported by Facebook, more than 2.2 billion people are on Facebook and 78% of American consumers have discovered something on Facebook and then purchased it from a retailer or small business.

For more information on the website products, contact Jeanne Colombo at jeannec@passportonlineinc.com.

About Passport Online

Passport Online is the leisure travel industry leader in website, web content, email marketing, and social media solutions. Passport also offers state of the art cruise and tour booking engine solutions for b-to-b and b-to-c needs. A major distribution channel for leisure travel suppliers to connect with the leading consortia, retail agencies, professional home-based agent networks, and their clients, Passport Online enables millions of consumer shopping sessions on thousands of travel agency websites. For more information, visit www.passportonlineinc.com.

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