



Case Study: Hurtigruten

How do you sell a product that your customers can't pronounce?



Hurtigruten

Industry: Travel & Tourism
Location: Bellevue, WA
Size:

Company Bio

In business since 1893, Hurtigruten operates premium exploration voyages to Norway, Greenland, Spitsbergen, Iceland, Europe, Africa, South America, Central America, Arctic Canada, and Antarctica.

Overview

With an unfamiliar, hard-to-pronounce name and a minimum \$7,000 per person price tag, A Hurtigruten voyage could be a hard sell to the US market. HoZ's Sandi Olson helped them refine their marketing voice, build a portfolio of content, and streamline their processes.

One annual sale saw a 136% increase in bookings.

Not clicks, or opens, but actual product sales!

The Challenge

Hurtigruten is a household name in much of northern Europe - they're the ships that have been winding their way through the Norwegian fjords for hundreds of years. But even people who have traveled with them often can't say their name. While the company had a researched and refined set of target market personas already developed for the North American market, much of the existing content came from the corporate office - where the targets and messaging were quite different. Sandi at HoZ was tasked with creating weekly emails that could be re-purposed to the website and to travel agents for their marketing materials. The content had to speak to the intended audience in America without straying too far from the corporate directives.

The Approach

Existing content was breaking trust and not connecting with the target audience. An abrupt change in voice - even a more effective voice - might lose more people, so iterative change was necessary. The changes could be broken into 3 categories: maturing the existing voice, developing consistency across multiple channels, and building organizational structure around content development.

With Sandi's previous experience at other cruise companies, the development of the voice was fairly seamless. Simple tactics like adding the Oxford comma to promote clarity and intentionally varying sentence length within each paragraph to promote interest helped refine the existing copy.

Prior to Sandi's arrival, the team didn't have a style guide of any kind. Sandi started developing one, then a full-time editor was brought in to complete the task. Sandi worked closely with the editor to develop and distribute the style guide at regular intervals to help acclimate the team to considering it when creating copy, whether it be for print, web, email, or digital advertising.

The growth of the team provided an excellent opportunity for some organizational development. Adding a project task manager, stripping extra code from the templates, and organizing the internal filing system provided easier access to the content Sandi created, and that consistency between how Hurtigruten spoke about a voyage in the email and on the website translated into similar messaging in the annual brochure.

The Solution

Sandi's primary focus was on the weekly consumer emails. Each week, she could adjust specific elements of the emails and review the open and click-through rates that resulted from those changes. Since cruise purchasing behavior is fairly consistent, year-over-year, reviews of previous years' engagement were also considered. Engagement is often the prime KPI (key performance indicator) of a digital marketing team, but Sandi was also able to have some visibility on actual booking rates, so the full purchasing lifecycle was open to review.

With the improved level of professionalism that comes from consistent style and some clearing out of excess code in the email template, the process of creating each weekly email became more streamlined. More attention could be focused on the details of the content rather than technical issues or questions of grammar.

Where the previous team had regularly pulled some copy from the British site, some from the translations that came from the corporate office in Norway, and some from previous year's marketing materials, now each new offer had a concise, mature, professional message. These offers and the corresponding content portfolio was now more appropriate for the US market.

"Sandi saved me when I was drowning in projects! She understands how to create effective digital campaigns and programs, of course. But more than that, Sandi has a rare blend of marketing skills including content copy writing, design development and programming, which made her a big contributor to my team."

- Brad Olsen
Marketing Director

The Results

The processes and systems for creating marketing content had been so successfully streamlined, that the role of creating the weekly emails was no longer a full-time position. With steadily increased click through and open rates as well as improvements in communication with travel agents, Sandi transitioned out of her contract at Hurtigruten and was replaced by a freelance team - one who created the copy and another who coded it into the now-functional email templates.