#Limitless

TRAVEL BEYOND JOURNEYS

GTTP Student Travel Research Competition

CREATE A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN BASED ON RESEARCH TO ATTRACT TALENT TO THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

By Het Raval and Neev Thakkar

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i - Abstract

This research paper underlines the impact of social media as a tool for growing and spreading awareness in and about the travel and tourism industry. In the post-2020 landscape, social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram have offered a new avenue for attracting professionals to the sector. So here, we first delve into the economic significance of international tourism, and then we talk about the impacts of social media on this ever-changing landscape, the key ways by which social media can benefit organisations, and highlight how the travel and tourism industry can be grown using a well-constructed social media campaign to attract talent.

To first identify the key elements of a successful social media campaign, we start by analysing historical examples, including Dove's #RealBeauty and Apple's #ShotOniPhone campaigns. In these case studies, we demonstrate the power of social media in building emotional connections with audiences and highlight the importance of engaging the audience with user-generated content. The paper also examines the structure of social media and its role in influencing public perceptions, particularly through influencers and brand-driven content.

To give context and to properly understand our demographic, the research includes a survey aimedat understanding the people's motivations and barriers in joining the travel and tourism industry. The findings from this survey help us properly outline a comprehensive social media campaign, titled #Limitless, designed to attract new talent to the industry. The campaign includes multiple elements, such as video series, web interviews, and user-generated content challenges, all aimed at showcasing the industry's opportunities and addressing potential concerns of job seekers.
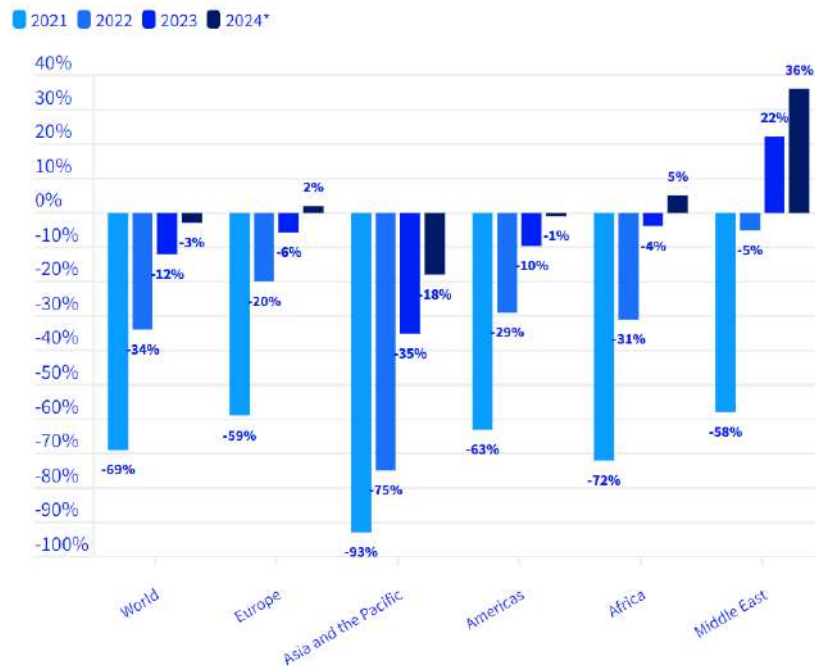
The paper then concludesby describing how a well-executed social media campaign grounded in thorough research and innovative strategies can be conducted and how it has the potential to significantly boost recruitment and awareness in the travel and tourism sector which would help the industry in its recovery and growth in the post-pandemic world.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

"Social media is both an art and a science. It's a science because you need to test and learn what is effective on different social platforms. You need to test the techniques that gain maximum engagement and amplification on each platform by using the latest organic and paid tactics." – smartinsights.com

1.1Travel and Tourism after 2020

International Tourist Arrivals (% change over 2019)

Legend: 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024*

Region	2021	2022	2023	2024*
World	-69%	-34%	-12%	-3%
Europe	-59%	-20%	-6%	2%
Asia and the Pacific	-93%	-75%	-35%	-18%
Americas	-63%	-29%	-10%	-1%
Africa	-72%	-31%	-4%	5%
Middle East	-58%	-5%	22%	36%

Source: UN Tourism | World Tourism Organization © • % change over 2019 | *Preliminary figures
Data as collected by UN Tourism, May 2024. Published: 21/05/2024

The travel and tourism industry is very economically significant today with international tourism generating a whopping $1.4 trillion globally. However, despite going through a robust recovery from Covid-19, the industry still faces many critical challenges including labour shortages and unsustainability. But these issues also give us new opportunities to attract professionals with expertise in new and developing fields such as digital marketing, sustainability and technology, and running campaigns on platforms such as YouTube and Instagram has proven to be the strongest and easiest way to do so.

This can be easily observed by looking at the results of a survey conducted by Google in 2013 on what the sources of information of people travelling abroad were. The internet had a clear lead with majority of the people saying that social media platforms had a great influence on their travel destination and was generally a reliable source of travel information.
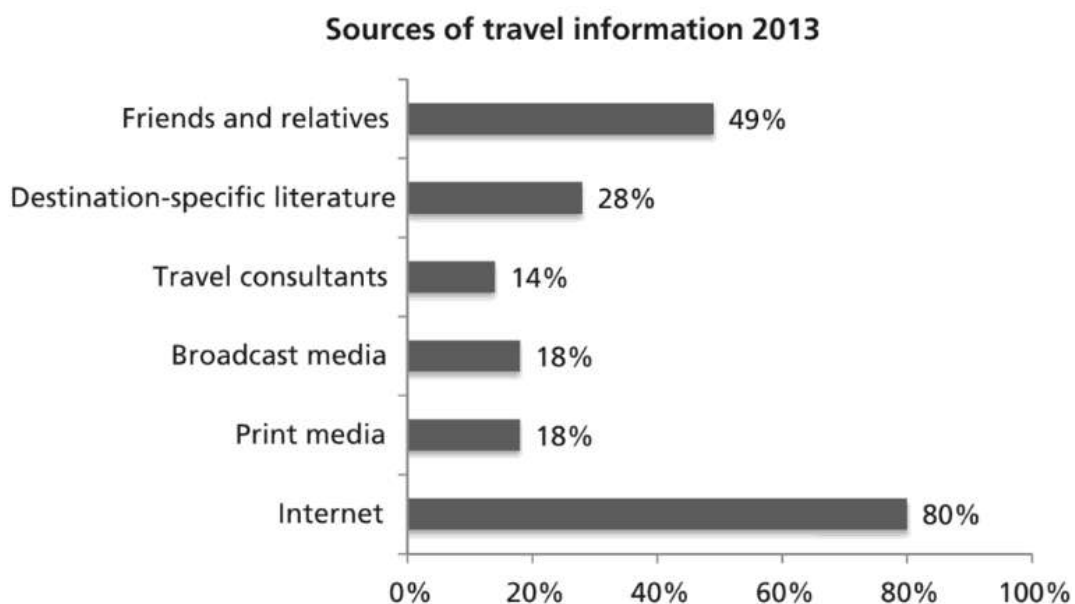
Sources of travel information 2013

| Source	Percentage
Friends and relatives	49%
Destination-specific literature	28%
Travel consultants	14%
Broadcast media	18%
Print media	18%
Internet	80%

Figure 3: Sources of travel information 2013 (Source: based on Google, 2013)

1.2 Social Media

So, what is the structure of social media and how has it had such a great impact on informing the mass public about travel? Well, social media platforms such as Instagram have "Influencers" which are popular creators who create content based on trends which people (their followers) are generally interested in. These trends often include certain travel destinations or popular tourist spots. As these posts garner millions of impressions, awareness is quickly spread amongst prospective travellers about the travel and tourism industry. Hence it can be said without a doubt that the Internet has had a very profound impact on spreading awareness about the industry as a whole.

But travel influencers aren't the only people who can create and hop onto these trends as entire brands and companies have made social media accounts where they post informative material for the general public to raise awareness. A good example would be National Geographic who post photos, videos and engage with their community regularly while promoting their shows and web series. And it is clearly working as their Instagram account alone has over 45 million followers.
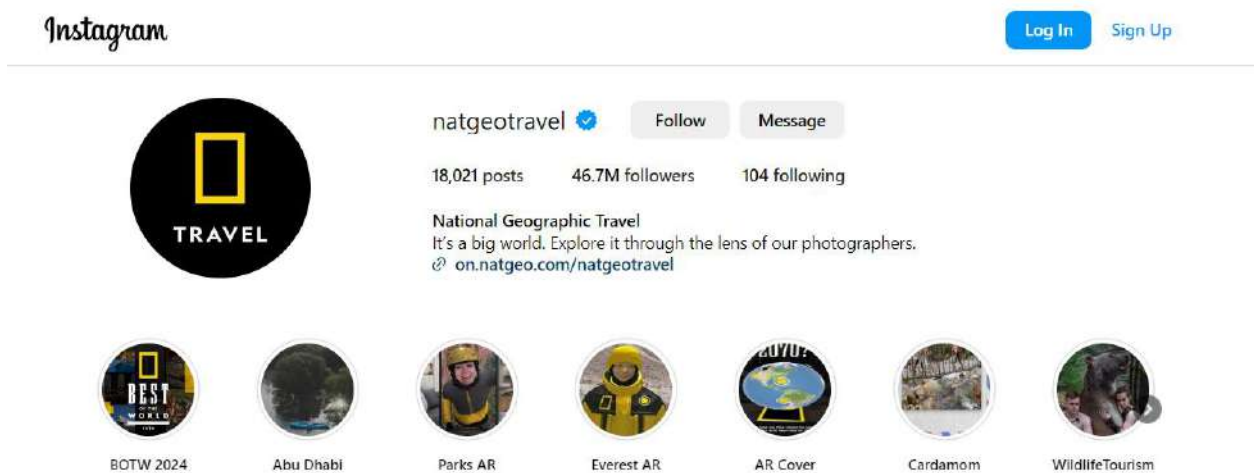
When brands create content to raise awareness on a particular product, show, issue, topic, or industry, they typically do so in the form of a social media campaign. These campaigns can become massively popular creating new trends which many other influencers talk about and can be a sure-fire way to get the whole world's eyes on whatever you are trying to promote.

Chapter 2 – Social Media Campaigns

"A social media campaign is a coordinated set of marketing actions across one or many social channels. The tactics share a common purpose and are designed to reach your company's goals." – sproutsocial.com

2.1 What makes a Good Social Media Campaign?

The question now becomes, what is a social media campaign? And, moreover, what makes a good social media campaign? A campaign can last for a few days, weeks or sometimes even months or years. During this time period, the social media manager of the account will put out posts related to the topic they are trying to promote. The frequency of these posts can vary but the campaign is most efficient if they are done daily or at least bi-weekly. A lot of thought and preparation goes on before and during the execution of the campaign as the posts, videos, marketing strategies, upload schedule, and many other platform-dependant factors need to be created and thought out before-hand after thorough discussion.

A good social media campaign can be best described by observing other popular campaigns which have been conducted in the past and seeing how they affected the brands. So now let's look at two very popular and profound campaigns which have been conducted in the past and learn from their execution strategies in order to formulate the layout of our own campaign.

2.2 Case Study: Dove and Apple

The first social media campaign we will be taking a look at is Dove's #RealBeauty campaign which has been running from the year 2004 till present date. It has been going on for so long that it has practically become their brand mission.

In 2004, Dove found that amongst research groups, only 2% of the total women they surveyed considered themselves to be beautiful [1]. So, they created a brand revival campaign with messaging around inner beauty, authenticity and female empowerment called the #RealBeauty campaign. The campaign reassured women that they were beautiful no matter their physical appearance and put out posts raising women's self-esteem. The entire campaign's message was that every woman is beautiful in her own way and therefore shouldn't compare themselves with impractical beauty standards pushed by the general media and feel bad or inadequate.

They created videos such as the "Evolution" video on YouTube [2]. In 2006 which is considered the first viral brand video on the platform. In the video, they showed a normal woman promoting their product and showed the process of artificially enhancing her appearance and digitally removing her flaws to make her look perfect and like a model before putting her image on a billboard. This video shows how the impossible and unachievable beauty standards set by the industry are faked. Moreover, they pledged to stop all retouching and digital post-production facial feature enhancement across their marketing in 2018, which earned the brand a lot of attention in the competition for "Best Social Media Ad Campaign of 2018" which

they eventually won. Furthermore, they partnered up with Getty Images to make 5000 images of underrepresented women free for public use and flooded Shutterstock with photographs of women tagged "beautiful", all taken by award-winning photographers, while encouraging others to do the same.

Campaigns like this help garner positive attention by tapping into the people's feelings and making them feel more secure about themselves, thus boosting their brand image. By surveying their target demographics and harnessing customer insights, Dove developed ads that spoke directly to their customers. And it clearly worked as in the Prophet Brand Relevance Index (BRI), Dove remains the most relevant brand in the Household & Personal category. And its score for Customer Obsession puts it in the top 10 of all brands.

Another great example of showcasing the people's creativity and allowing them to advertise the product via posts more than a marketing team ever could is Apple's #ShotOniPhone campaign which started in 2015.

In 2015, Apple encouraged users to post photos they had shot on their iPhones as part of a contest, the prize being a chance for their work to be featured on one of their 10,000 billboards across the world. The campaign blew up instantly as the tag #ShotOniPhone got over 16 million entries on Instagram alone [3]. People went wild trying to click the best photos and the most dramatic and cinematic videos in order to get their work acknowledged by Apple. Hence, Apple made the most of their huge user base and invested in user-generated content to promote the Apple lifestyle using organic posts.

It's worth noting that this is a kind of social media advertisementwhich Apple doesn't put much budget or effort into. That is, it's an ongoing exposure campaign that is run by their fan base and not by a dedicated marketing team. This shows the importance of organic posts and how crucial it is that you make people talk about your campaign more to promote it further.

Chapter 3 – Collecting Data

"There once was a salt maker who had a large social media following of slugs. Long story short, he didn't sell much salt." – surveymonkey.com

3.1 Aims of The Survey and Its Creation

We have learnt a lot about social media campaigns so far, but before we can implement our findings into an actual campaign, we must first understand our target demographic. Getting subscribers and followers is a very crucial part of strengthening campaign results, however, we must make sure that our following is of the demographic we are trying to attract, i.e. professionals in digital marketing and graphic design who can help promote the travel and tourism industry. Moreover, we must identify the barriers that is preventing talented people from entering the industry and also find out what incentives or benefits professionals seek out when they look into joining an industry.

Keeping these questions along with many other possible factors in mind, this is the rough outline of all the questions of the survey conducted Questions 1 through 4 were demographic questions asking about the general age, gender and occupation of the informant. Questions 5 through 7 ask the informant if they are interested in joining the travel and tourism industry, why they would like to join, and which sector of the industry they want to join. Question 8 inquires about the barriers stopping the informants from joining the travel and tourism industry. Question 9 asks about their preferred social media platform. Question 10 is an optional open-ended question asking for feedback on how the travel and tourism industry can attract talent.

3.2 Results and Interpretation
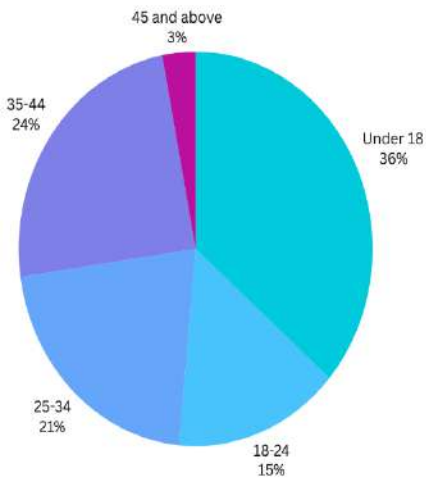
Question 1 showed that a majority of the people filling the survey were young people (under 18). Therefore, the campaign should cater to a younger audience and mid-career professionals with different messaging strategies for each demographic.
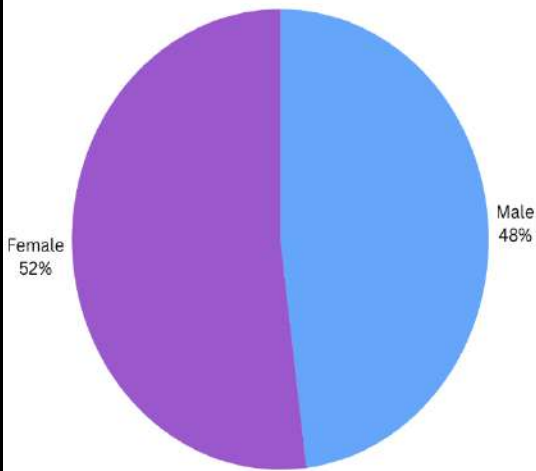

Question 2 showed that there were slightly more females interested in joining the industry than males. Hence we can create messaging around woman empowerment and show strong, independent females working in the industry.
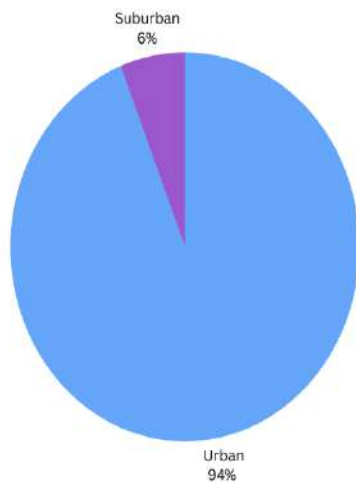
Question 3 proved that our campaign needs to be heavily urban-centric as a majority of the informants were living in urban areas. The rest reported to be residing in suburbs, showing the clear lack of interest from those in rural areas.
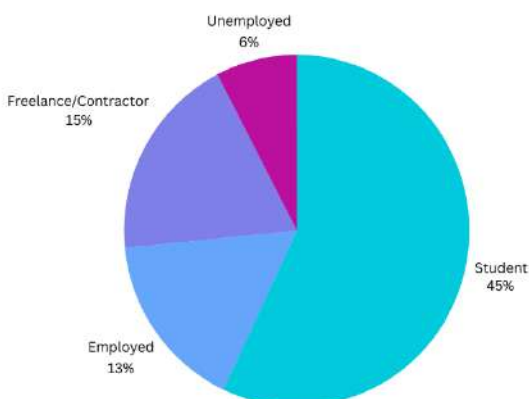
Question 4 asked about their occupations and as expected, most answers were "Student" as a majority of the respondents were under 18. However, it was interesting to see how there were more freelancers and contractors than employed people. Since these types of occupations usually favour freedom and creativity, we have to highlight such aspects in the travel and tourism industry as well.

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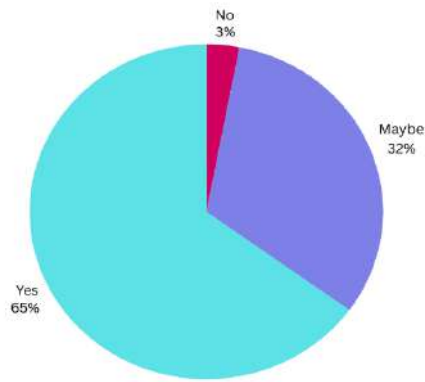
Question 5 asked if they were interested in joining the travel and tourism industry, and at the time of the survey, 65% of the people showed clear support whereas 32% of the people were unsure. Only 3% of the people showed disinterest in joining travel and tourism.
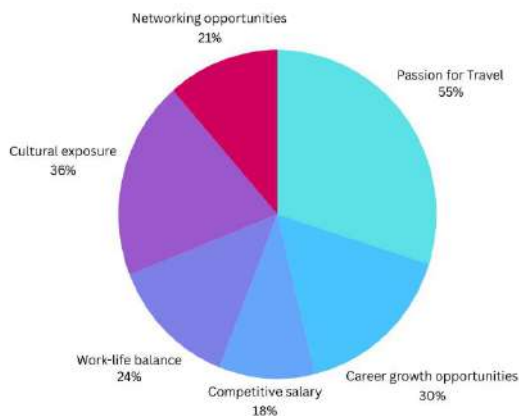

Question 6 asked why they wanted to join the travel and tourism industry. "Passion for Travel" and "Cultural Exposure" emerged as the biggest incentives for those interested and hence our campaign needs to use these attributes as the key points of our posts.
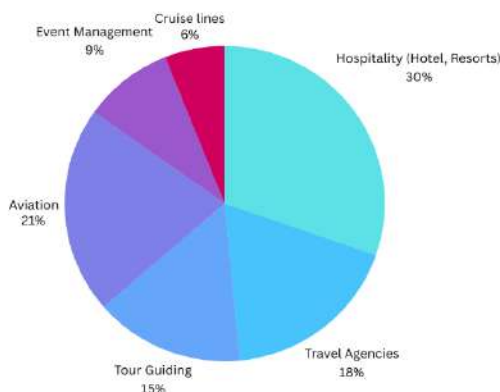
Question 7 asked which sector of the industry the respondents preferred to join. "Hospitality" and "Aviation" were at the top hence our campaign will have a strong push towards business opportunities in these sectors.
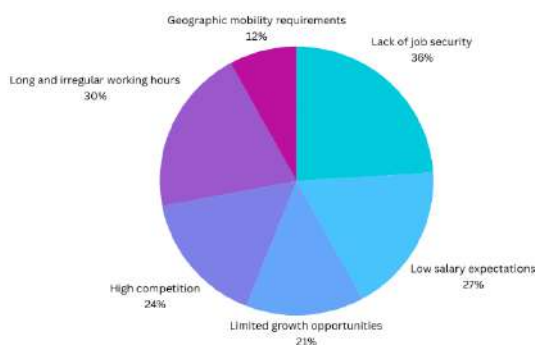
Question 8 questioned the respondents on what barriers and challenges they were facing which prevented them from joining the industry. A clear majority of the people cited "Lack of Job Security" and "Irregular Working Hours" as to why they weren't a part of the travel and tourism industry. Our campaign needs to conduct interviews with long-time professionals in the industry on these topics to try and mitigate these concerns.
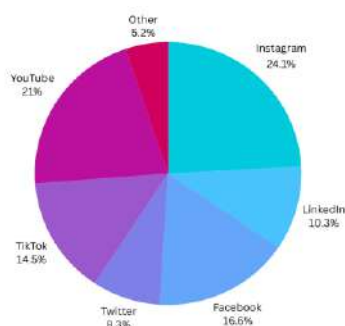
Question 9 asked them the social media platforms on which they are active. Since YouTube and Instagram are the most popular, we will be focusing on those while creating and posting material for our campaign

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Chapter 4 – #Limitless

"Jobs fill your pocket; Adventures fill your soul" – *Jamie Lyn Beatty*

4.1 What is #Limitless?

Having observed the structure of social media, its history with the travel and tourism industry, looking at past campaigns, learning from their successes and their mistakes, researching about our demographic using surveys and gathering data, a proper social media campaign can now be created, named #Limitless with the slogan "Travel beyond Journeys". It is a nuanced, multi-faceted, multi-platform campaign with many elements to ensure its success. It has multiple elements so that everybody has a piece of content from #Limitless which they can enjoy. This campaign will be promoted mostly on Instagram and YouTube. Some proof-of-concept artworks for the posts are given below; these are all conceptual designs and can be changed later. All people and names portrayed are fictitious.

4.2 Campaign Elements

1. "Limitless Strength" Series

This will be a heart-touching video series dedicated to promoting inclusivity and instilling a positive impression in people's minds. It will give content for people to watch and share with their friends, increasing the impressions of the campaign.

Content: It will be a series of videos showing professionals who have certain mental or physical disabilities and their stories in the travel and tourism industry.

Objective: This series will address concerns about job security and career growth by showing real examples of people succeeding in the industry despite setbacks.

2. "Limitless Innovators" Web Series

This will be an online web series available exclusively on YouTube showcasing interviews with industry-leading experts who will talk about the innovative roles and career opportunities available in the travel and tourism industry.

Content: It will be a web series focused on innovative roles within the travel and tourism industry. It will include interviews with tech-savvy professionals who are using technology to revolutionize travel, or with sustainability experts who are making the industry eco-friendlier.

Objective: This series will highlight the true diversity of career opportunities in the travel and tourism industry, hopefully attracting younger job seekers.

3. "The Limitless Challenge" on Social Media

This will be the main driving force of the campaign. As we have learnt from earlier, engaging with people is a sure-fire way to boost a campaign's popularity. And this is best done in the form of a viral social media challenge

Content: It will be a monthly competition where people are urged to make posts on their own experiences with the industry and ideas on how it can be improved. Every month the best idea about improving the industry will be posted on the GTTP page and the person/s behind the post will get a chance to meet the Executive Director of GTTP Dr. Anne Lotter herself and also attend an online exposition where they can talk about ways to have their idea implemented.

Objective: By engaging the audience actively, it will create a sense of ownership and excitement about the possibilities within the travel and tourism industry. This challenge will help create user-generated content that can be shared to build brand presence.

4. "Limitless Stories" by Travel Influencers

As we have already seen, collaborating with popular travel influencers is the best way to attract viewership.

Content: It will contain posts and videos where we collaborate with travel influencers who are already well known and have them talk about career opportunities in the travel industry by sharing their own stories of how they started out as small creators before eventually becoming the giants they are today while focusing on how the industry allowed them to live

"beyond limits." Content will include Instagram takeovers and YouTube vlogs that show the real-life benefits and opportunities of working in the industry.

Objective: By connecting the sentimental values fans already have for the influencers to the campaign's cause, this series willleverage the reach and authenticity of influencers to spread the campaign message by starting trends that align with the campaign's theme.

4.3 Executing the Campaign

While executing the campaign some things are to be kept in mind and followed. All posts and videos must have consistent branding, i.e. they should all contain the #Limitless logo, colours and message. Except for some exclusive material, almost all of the posts should be posted on more than one platform to ensure that it reaches as many people as possible and that the campaign remains multi-faceted. The account must also consistently respond to messages, comments and have frequent interactions to keep potential job seekers engaged.

However, most importantly, a User-Friendly Career Portal has to be developed. In Question 10 of our survey, most of the respondents found the process of finding a good company/firm amongst the hundreds of travel brands in the industry difficult, convoluted and daunting. Hence, this problem needs to be solved by creating a career portal which is user friendly and allows prospective talented individuals to showcase their work to GTTP directly where they can be helped by career counsellors and guides who can give them crucial insights on the different sectors and job opportunities in the industry without them getting overwhelmed. By streamlining the recruitment process, the campaign can attract hundreds if not thousands of jobs to the travel and tourism industry. An example domain for the website, i.e. gttp.org/careerportal/ has been shown in each concept post given above and the same must be done while conducting a campaign. An example of how the site could look like and function can be accessed at https://gttpindia-org-careerportal.my.canva.site
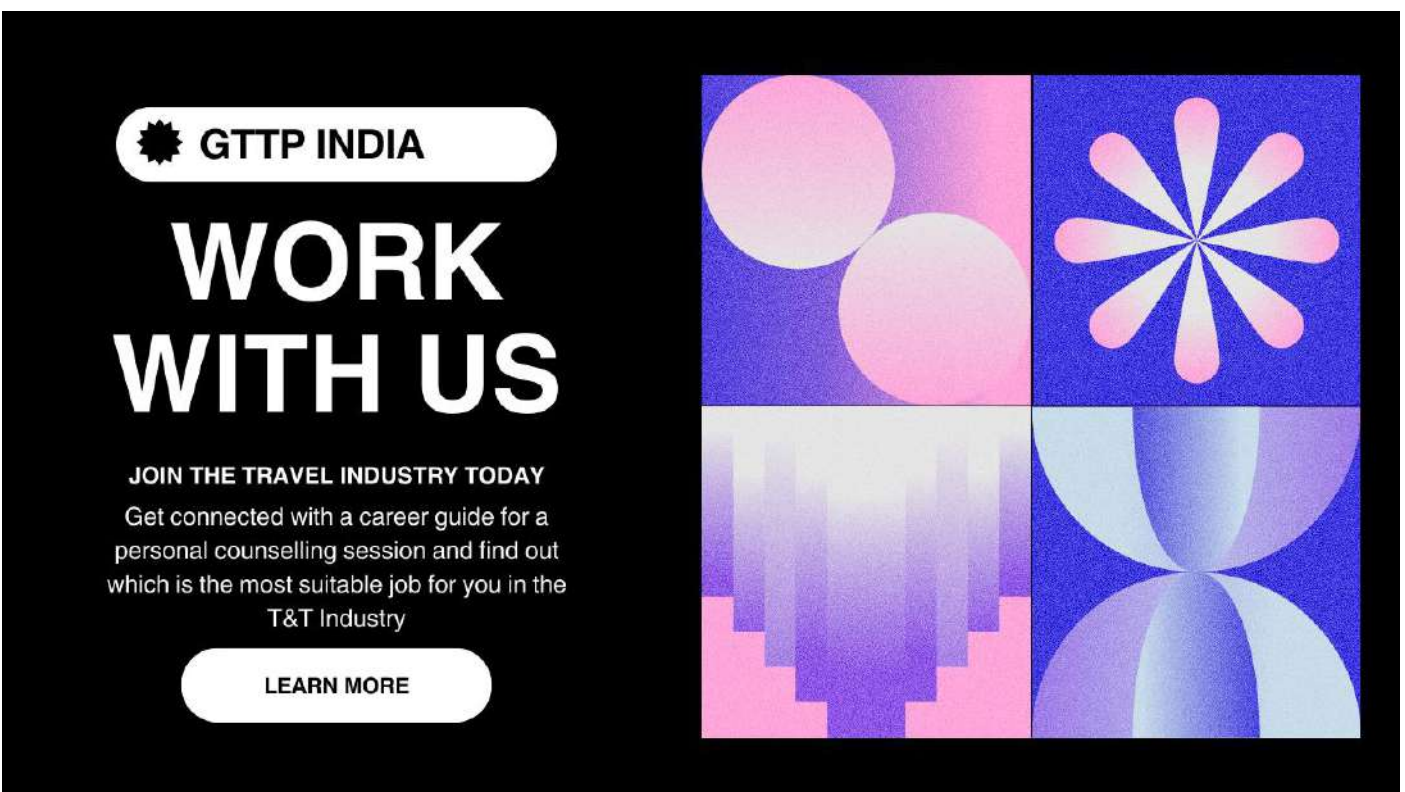
Chapter 5 – Conclusion

"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page"–St. Augustine

5.1 Summary of Findings

The exploration began with defining a problem: How Covid-19 had affected the travel and tourism industry drastically and how the socio-economic problems faced by the industry post 2020 required new young ideas and talents. It eventually led to a path of discovery and research, ending with a solution: Creating a brand new, innovative social media campaign on the world's largest platforms that is sure to bring thousands of new minds to the rapidly growing and prospective industry.

We saw how a Social Media Campaign would be the best solution to the problem and subsequently learned from past campaigns which have proven to be successful, namely Dove's #RealBeauty and Apple's #ShotOniPhone campaigns. They provided valuable insights into how brands can build strong emotional connections and create movements that resonate with people on a personal level. These principles were integral in shaping the strategy for the #Limitless campaign.

As we observed, we needed a core issue to solve and a clear idea for our campaign. So, before creating the campaign, we took a survey to identify the pressing issues in our target demographics which were stopping them from joining the industry. We deeply analysed the results and came up with a gameplan for the campaign. To ensure its success, we made sure it was multi-faceted, i.e. it had multiple streams of content for people to engage and interact with. We showcased talent from the industry and how they got there, we gave representation to specially-abled people and their journey to the top, we made a brand-new, sleek-looking website which streamlined the recruitment process and allowed people to get matched with the right industry, all while mitigating their top concerns such as job security and providing them the bonuses they wanted such as creativity, freedom and competitive salary.

If executed as outlined in this research paper, #Limitless can theoretically become be the largest social media campaign in the history of travel and tourism. With the potential to educate millions of people around the world about this blossoming industry and having the power to bring thousands of talented people to travel and tourism to utilise their skills, this campaign is sure to revive the travel sector as a whole.

ii - Appendix

The Survey form in its entirety with the options and their respective responsesis given below:

Q.1 What is Your Age?

Under 18 – 12 Responses (36%)

18-24 – 5 Responses (15%)

25-34 – 7 Responses (21%)

35-44 – 8 Responses (24%)

45 and above – 1 Responses (3%)

Q.2 What is Your Gender?

Male – 16 Responses (48%)

Female – 17 Responses (52%)

Prefer not to say – 0 Responses (0%)

Other – 0 Responses (0%)

Q.3 What is Your Location?

Urban – 31 Responses (94%)

Suburban – 2 Responses (6%)

Rural – 0 Responses (0%)

Other – 0 Responses (0%)

Q.4 What is Your Occupation?

Student – 15 Responses (45%)

Employed (Full-time/Part-time) – 10 Responses (30%)

Unemployed – 5 Responses (15%)

Freelance/Contractor – 2 Responses (6%)

Other:– 0 Responses (0%)

Q.5 Would you be Interested in Joining the Travel and Tourism Industry?

Yes – 14 Responses (42%)

No – 10 Responses (30%)

Maybe – 9 Responses (27%)

Q.6 If Yes or Maybe, Why would you like to join the Travel and Tourism Industry? (Select all that Apply)

Passion for travel – 18 Responses (55%)

Career growth opportunities – 10 Responses (30%)

Competitive salary – 6 Responses (18%)

Work-life balance – 8 Responses (24%)

Cultural exposure – 12 Responses (36%)

Networking opportunities – 7 Responses (21%)

Other: – 0 Responses (0%)

Q.7 Which Area of the Industry would you be MOST LIKELY to Pursue a Career in?

Hospitality (Hotels, Resorts) – 10 Responses (30%)

Travel Agencies – 6 Responses (18%)

Tour Guiding – 5 Responses (15%)

Aviation – 7 Responses (21%)

Event Management – 3 Responses (9%)

Cruise Lines – 2 Responses (6%)

Other: – 0 Responses (0%)

Q.8 What are the barriers stopping you from joining the Travel and Tourism Industry? (Select all that Apply)

Lack of job security – 12 Responses (36%)

Low salary expectations – 9 Responses (27%)

Limited growth opportunities – 7 Responses (21%)

High competition – 8 Responses (24%)

Long and irregular working hours – 10 Responses (30%)

Geographic mobility requirements – 4 Responses (12%)

Other:– 0 Responses (0%)

Q.9 Which Social Media Platforms do you use the most often? (Select all that Apply)

Instagram – 23 Responses (70%)

LinkedIn – 10 Responses (30%)

Facebook – 16 Responses (48%)

Twitter – 8 Responses (24%)

TikTok – 14 Responses (42%)

YouTube – 20 Responses (61%)

Other: Reddit– 5 Responses (15%)

Q.10 What do you think the Travel and Tourism industry can do to attract talent? (Optional)

Some of the key factors and common issues people talked about were:

"Offer more stable job opportunities."

"Increase salary ranges to match other industries."

"Promote cultural exchange programs more aggressively."

"Highlight work-life balance and flexibility."

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