



# FILL YOUR UNSOLD CABINS AND ROOMS WITHOUT DISCOUNTS

When cabins and rooms are unsold a month or two out, cruise lines and resorts have to choose between two terrible options:

**Option 1:** Leave the inventory unsold and hurt profitability

OR

**Option 2:** Discount, which just encourages vacationers to wait for a deal, making the unsold inventory problem worse in the future...

# TODAY, THERE IS AN OPTION 3:

Use the last twelve months of click data from your website to identify travelers with interest in vacations similar to your unsold inventory. This works both for past guests and for unknown visitors on your website.

You already know the value using past purchase history to target emails, direct mail and call center outreach. The problem is you have only a few (or one!) purchases from past guests, and none from your unknown website visitors. This limits your ability to match your unsold inventory to a traveler's interests.



# BROWSING DATA IS MUCH RICHER

It provides **20x more** information about the vacations a traveler has dreamed about, but not yet booked. The key is collecting these dreams in a way that you can use across your different marketing channels. And while this note focuses on unsold inventory, the tactics described below can also be applied to marketing new properties/ships and to optimizing existing marketing programs.

Here's what you need to match a traveler's dreams to your itineraries:

## **FIRST,**

Collect browsing data across four dimensions. Keep track of the pages your website displays to a prospective traveler so that you know what they are looking for:

- Destination (for cruise, think region)

- Type of property or class of ship

- Trip duration

- Check-in/Embarkation date

## SECOND,

Maintain browsing data for **at least 12 months**. The travelers who have looked at similar trips in the past are the most likely to buy your excess inventory at full price. We've seen strong results from intent data a year old and this also gives you a large audience to promote to, even for a niche product. You may be able to configure your Email Service Provider (ESP) or Experience Management Platform (EMP) to maintain this information. However, these platforms have two challenges:

1. ESP/EMPs natively focus on real time triggers so don't automatically store historical browsing data. Some completely lack the capacity to do so.
2. Most ESP/EMPs platforms can only track past guests who return on the same device and browser software they used to book their last trip. Since travelers change their phone/tablet/computer every year or two, these platforms struggle to recognize past guests when they return. Make sure that they are using an identity network to connect past guests who have changed devices.





## THIRD,

Create email/display/social campaigns for known past guests whose browsing data indicates interest in your excess inventory. You may want to follow-up with postcards. The traditional mail box **gets a lot more attention from travelers today than an email inbox.**

## FOURTH,

Reach known guests who have opted out of email with postcards/direct mail. For most travel brands, this is **more than 50%** of your known, high intent audience.

## FIFTH,

Use direct mail retargeting to reach unknown travelers who viewed pages similar (across the four dimensions mentioned above) to the itinerary of your excess inventory. These will also be first time guests for you... you can sell excess inventory and add new guests to your database! **There are usually 3-4x more travelers in this audience than 1-4 above combined.**





# FINALLY,

**Personalize** the communication you send (email/postcard/display/etc.) to emphasize whichever of the four dimensions (see point 1 above) matches your travelers dream vacation.

If the match is on destination, the creative should feature the destination. If the match is on the features at a resort property or cruise ship class, highlight that in your creative. This is easy to do in email and digital display ads. It's also now easy to accomplish with postcards...digital printing technology gives direct mail the same personalization capabilities as online advertising.

