



VISUAL INFLUENCERS

10 DMO's Getting Creative With Visual Content



10 DMOs USING VISUALS IN INNOVATIVE WAYS

While all DMOs use visuals in their marketing, most are just scratching the surface with the way they use authentic or aspirational photography and videos. There are a few, however, that truly stand out above the rest.

We've gathered 10 examples of DMOs doing seriously innovative things with their UGC and owned visual content - from creative YouTube video compilations, to photo-based trip planning technologies. Read on to learn how small destinations and industry leaders alike are taking visual storytelling to the next level.

Then, take this inspiration, and turn your destination's visual assets into a marketing tool that makes major waves in your industry.

Are you ready? Let's jump in.

“I have a ton of friends who travel...through the photos that they post, through the stories that they tell, I definitely get interested in a destination.”



WHAT IS VISUAL INFLUENCE?

In an era where social media accelerates word of mouth publicity and expands personal networks exponentially, DMOs need to find their place in the traveller's life, and remain a source of influence.

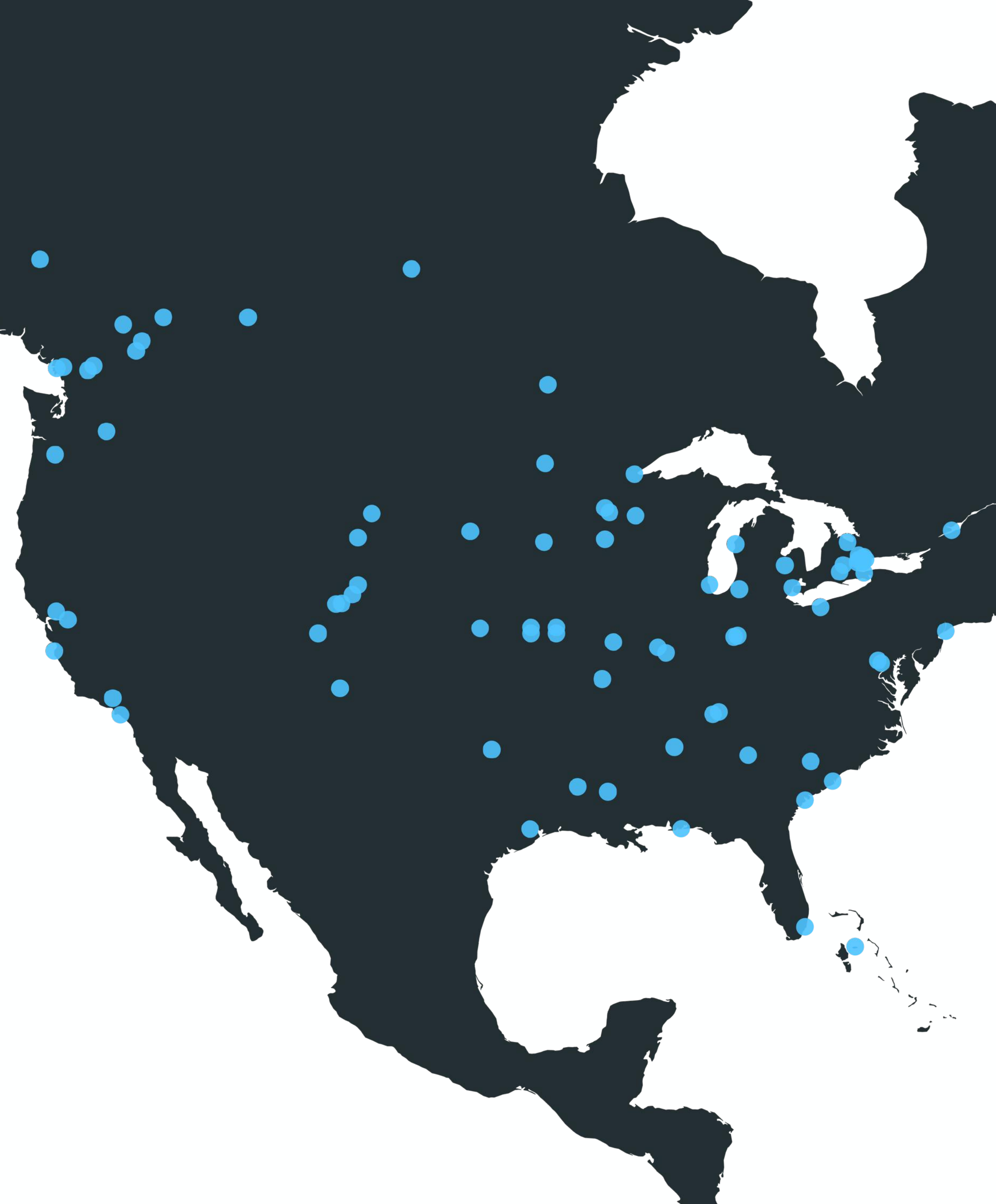
One way to do this is through photos. Now more than ever, travellers seek a blend of authentic and inspirational photography when discovering and choosing travel destinations. DMOs can be the source of both.

The best visuals of your destination come from a variety of sources - those you purchase or commission, and those taken by other travellers and shared on social media.

The forward-thinking DMOs highlighted here bring together both owned and earned visual content, to capture the attention and interest of travellers and locals alike.



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in travel, tourism and hospitality
across North America.



10 DMO VISUAL INFLUENCERS



VISIT STOCKTON

Background

Stockton is a city of 302,000 people in interior California. Its tourism website hosts over 30 UGC powered galleries that link out to Stockton attraction websites.

Why This Works

It can be challenging for smaller destinations to compete with their big budget counterparts. Stockton's strategy extends their reach by tapping into the networks of their visitors.

Linking photos to attraction websites also makes for a simple call to action. Visit Stockton does this with its gallery images*. Visitors can click, and be taken directly to the website related to the image.

*using CrowdRiff's CTA feature



YAKIMA VALLEY TOURISM

Background

Yakima Valley is a region of 94,000 people in the heart of Washington State wine country, and agritourism is an important part of their economy.

Visit Yakima uses header galleries on their website that are entirely made up of UGC content. The galleries randomize with different photos every time someone visits the site.

Why This Works

The galleries offer Yakima Valley the ability to dynamically update website content in a way that keeps fresh content front and center, without requiring manual updates to the site.

While UGC is featured prominently on the site, it is seamlessly incorporated into the design, which serves to both elevate the photos, and appeal to visitors attracted to refined wine and food experiences.



VISIT FRANKLIN

Background

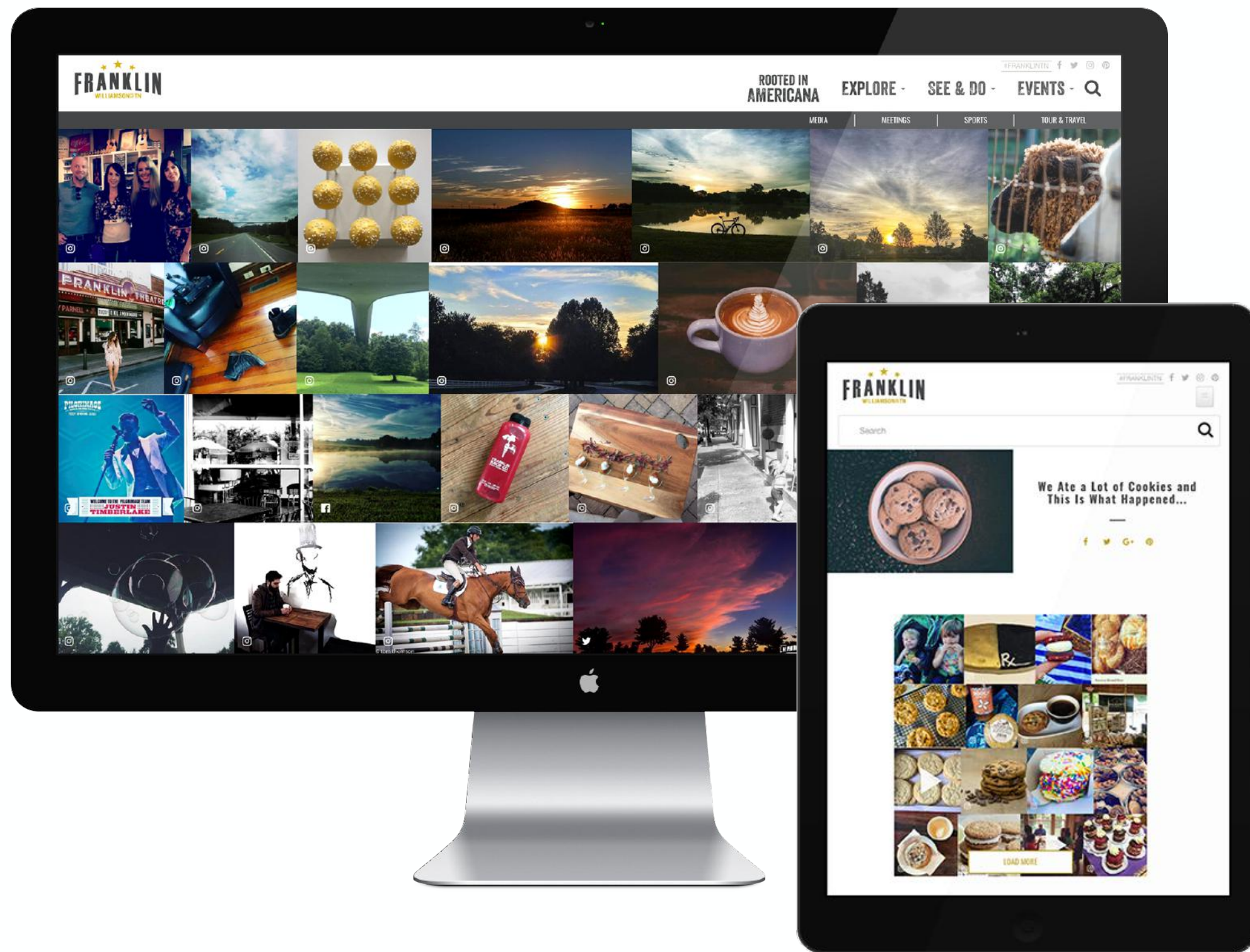
Franklin, Tennessee, home to 89,000 people, innovates with visuals that tell the stories of their Americana roots.

User-generated content is used throughout their visitor website, but Visit Franklin takes it one step further by using customized mini-UGC galleries in their blog posts.

Why This Works

These galleries feature over 50 pictures each, which is a great way to make blog posts more visually exciting and keep viewers on the page longer.

Visit Franklin also uses this opportunity to draw the photographers to the blog by commenting on the featured photo.



VISIT ICELAND

Background

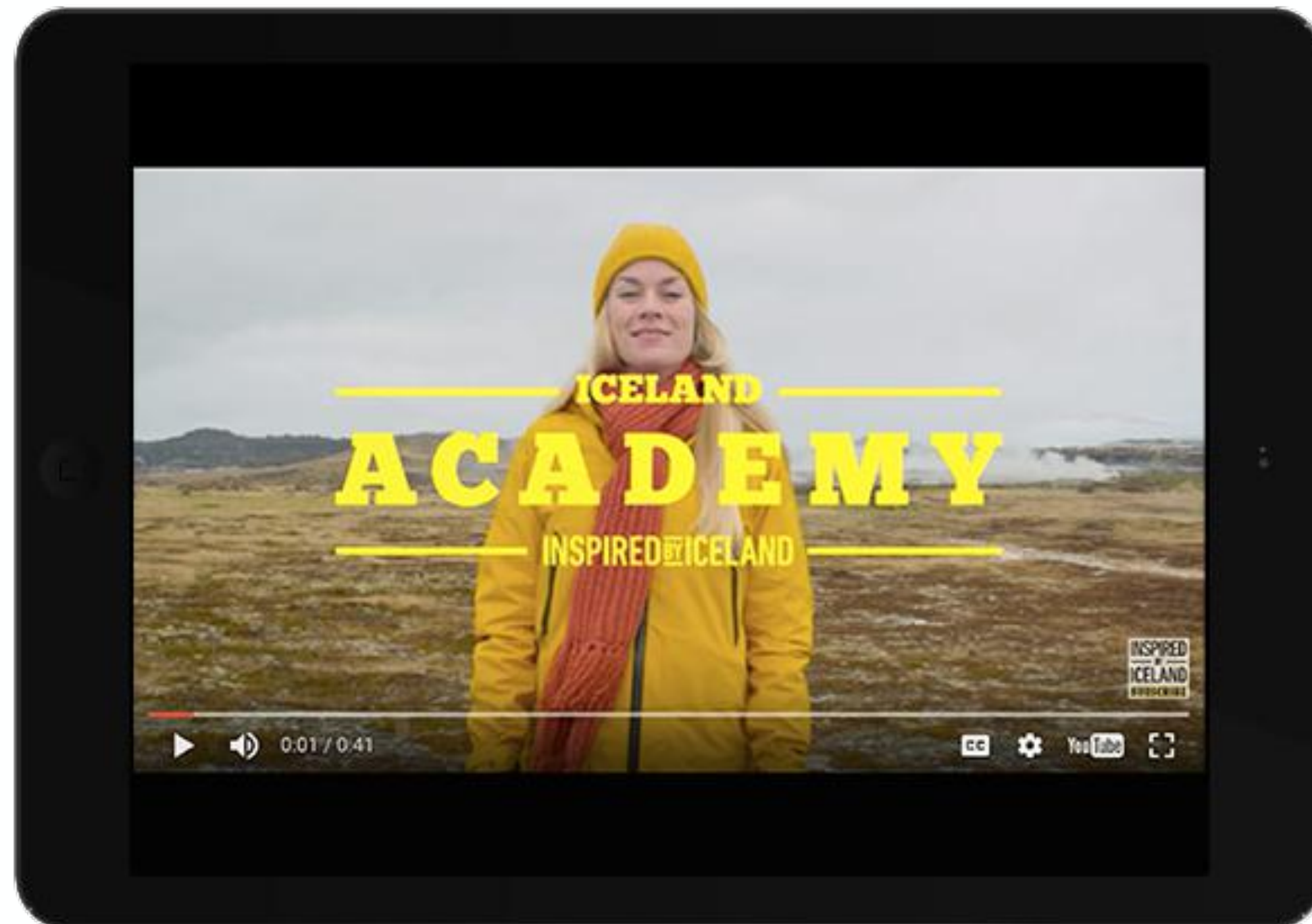
Iceland has experienced enviable growth in tourism in the last 6 years, partly due to its extraordinarily creative marketing.

To reach the more independent, cultured traveller, Visit Iceland created the Iceland Academy, a video series designed to teach visitors how to be respectful of the environment and local culture. This video series has been viewed over 2 million times.

Why This Works

Visit Iceland knew that to reach a unique kind of traveller, they would need to have a campaign that was correspondingly offbeat.

The visual stories strike a balance of being instructive yet not preachy.



VISIT COLORADO

Background

The State of Colorado has 5.5 million residents and has been breaking records for tourism, attracting over 77 million visitors in 2015 who spent a whopping \$19 billion! All of this on a marketing budget of \$19 million.

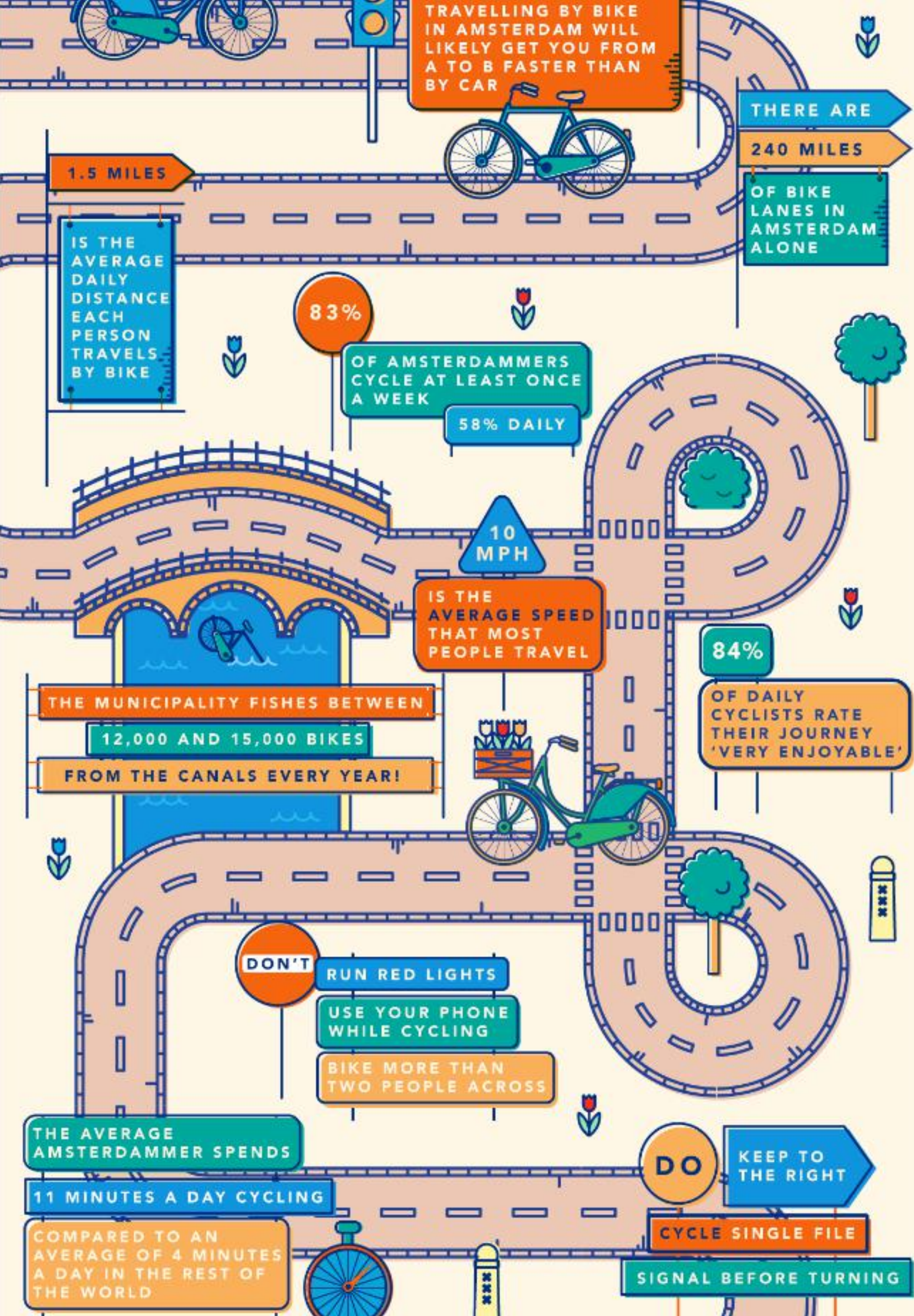
For one of their marketing campaigns, Visit Colorado built animated ad banners made up of UGC found on social. The banners click through to a #coloradolive landing page that hosts information and photos of things to do and see in the state.

Why This Works

The beautiful, authentic photos on these ad banners stand out from the usual Photoshopped images that people are used to seeing in advertising.

Source: The Denver Post





AMSTERDAM

Background

Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands, famed for its canals, picturesque buildings, and (most importantly for this campaign) bicycles.

Its tourism website now has an illustrated guide to cycling in Amsterdam to educate those visiting the city known for its large population of bike enthusiasts.

Why This Works

The visual style of this infographic is friendly and approachable. It also encourages visitors to experience an integral part of local Amsterdam life, whether they are a novice or expert cyclist.

This kind of infographic is ideal for destination websites and also a highly shareable asset that DMOs can offer to bloggers and traditional media.

VISIT SWEDEN

Background

Sweden, a country of 9.5 million people, attracts about 8 million annual visitors.

Visit Sweden runs “Curators of Sweden”, an initiative that lets a local Swede take over the nation’s Twitter account each week. Many of the curators use images to share their stories, painting a new picture of the country and showcasing something unique Sweden has to offer.

Why This Works

Sharing a different side of Sweden each week allows the country to show off a variety of regions, attractions and perspectives that would appeal to different types of visitors.

The photos the curators share are raw, authentic and more accessible compared to typical materials posted in an influencer takeover campaign.



SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

Background

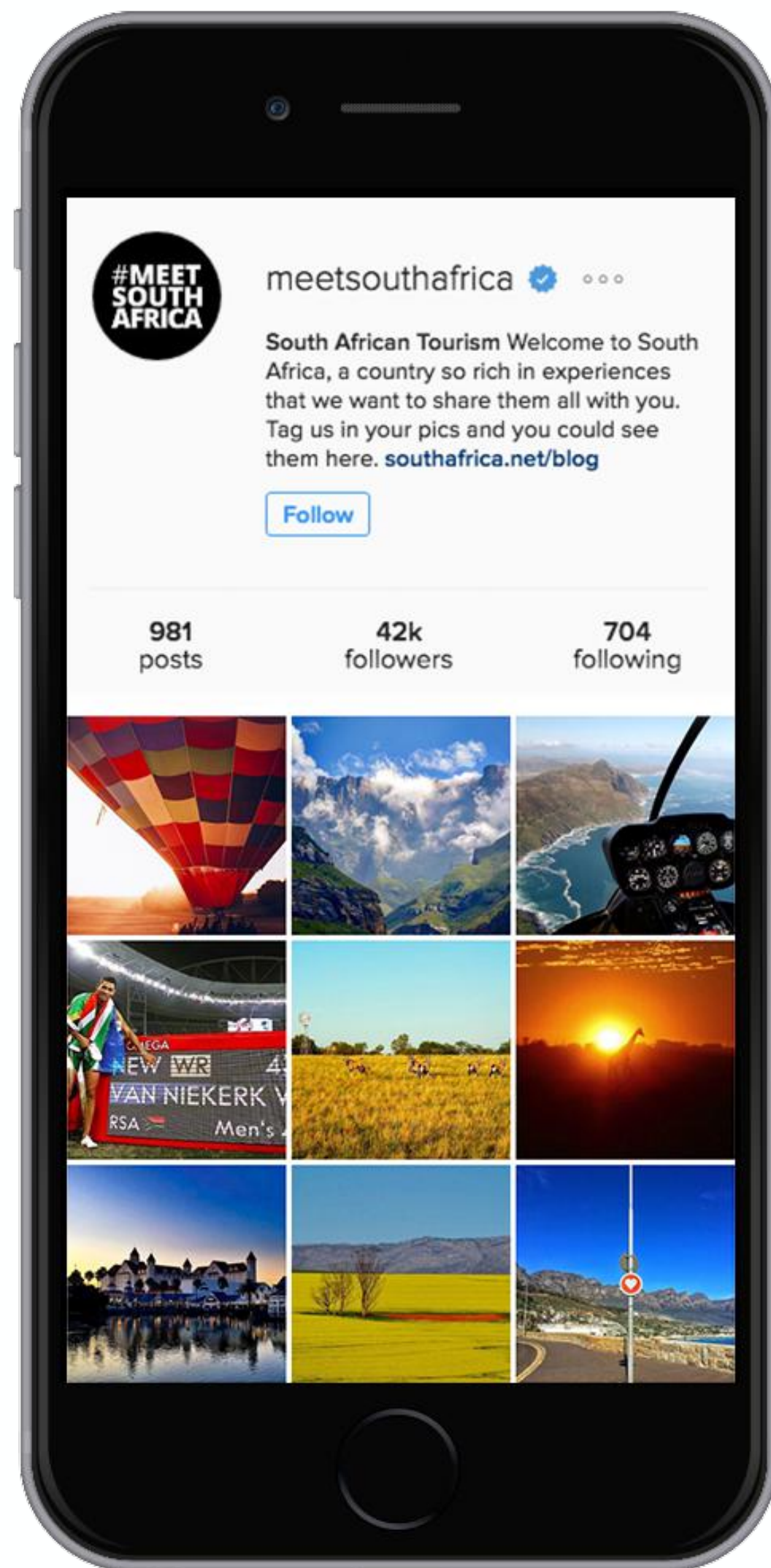
South Africa is a popular destination for both domestic and international tourists. Tourism accounts for 10% of jobs in the country*.

South African Tourism encourages visitors to post photos on social media with #meetsouthafrica for the chance to have their pictures appear in a blog post.

Why We Like This

By using visitor photos on their blog, South Africa Tourism offers social proof of just how extraordinary the destination is.

Encouraging the use of the hashtag also helps South Africa promote itself to its visitors' social networks, as their followers will see the great photos being posted and the hashtag associated with them.



*Source: The World Travel and Tourism Council

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA

Background

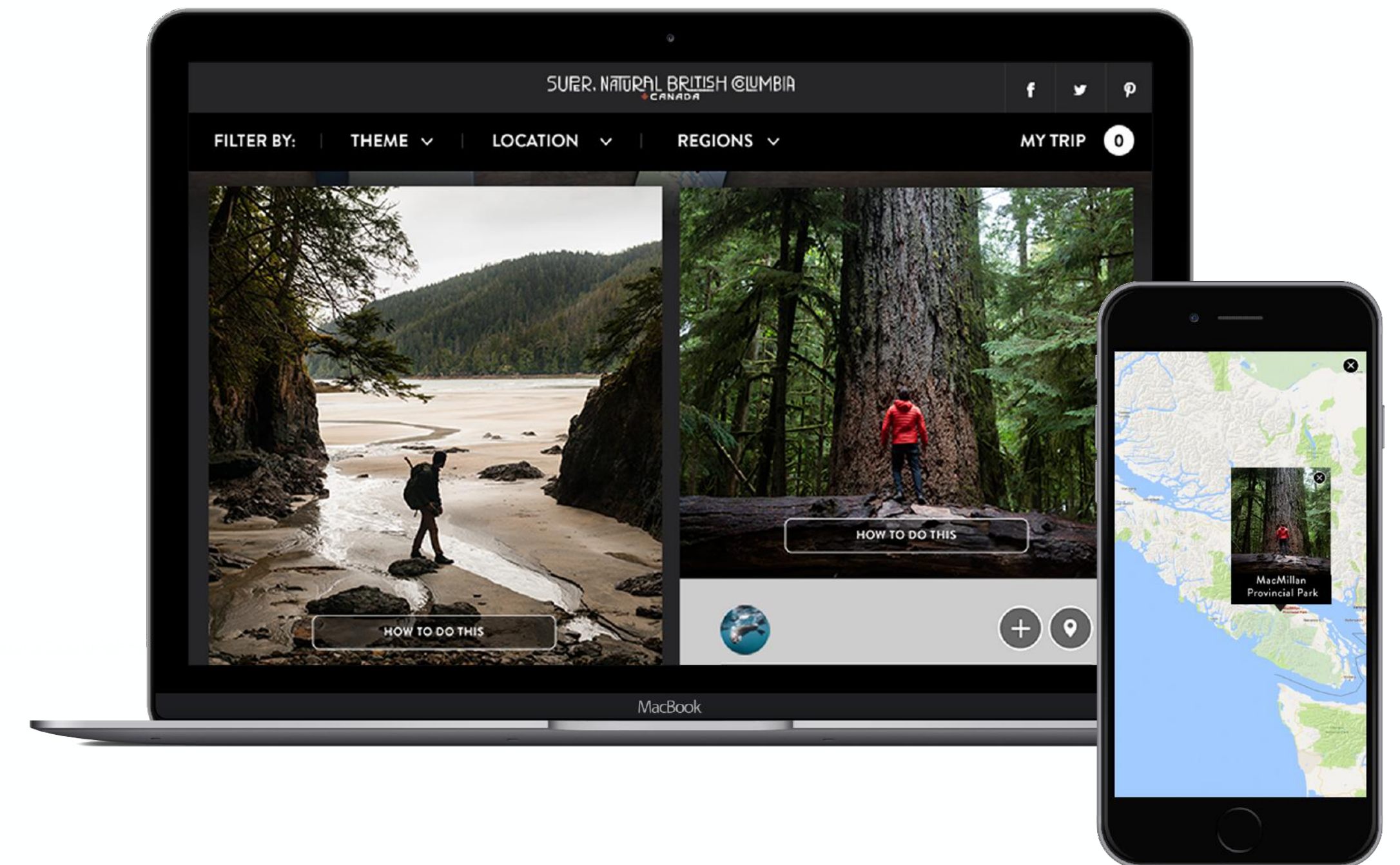
British Columbia is Canada's most Western province with a population of 4.7 million. Tourism accounts for over \$14 billion in annual revenue to the BC economy*.

Destination BC created BC Explorer, an “Instaplanner” that helps visitors plan their trips based on other visitors' Instagram photos.

Why This Works

Travellers can create a location-based photo map simply by clicking on the photos that excite them.

By clicking on the featured Instagram photos, travellers can connect directly to the websites of the featured local businesses.



*Source: CBC

VISIT SCOTLAND

Background

Scotland is a well established tourist destination.

Visit Scotland's website has an interactive map that identifies the best places to visit. On the map, pinpoints of destinations and attractions across the country expand to showcase photos of what each location is best known for.

Why We Like This

This map appeals to modern travellers, who want to visit destinations based on their interests, rather than take a standard tourist's trail through the country.

It offers a reason for visitors to come to their website versus planning their trip solely through 3rd party recommendations or social media. The visuals themselves entice viewers to browse further.





SASKATOON

Background

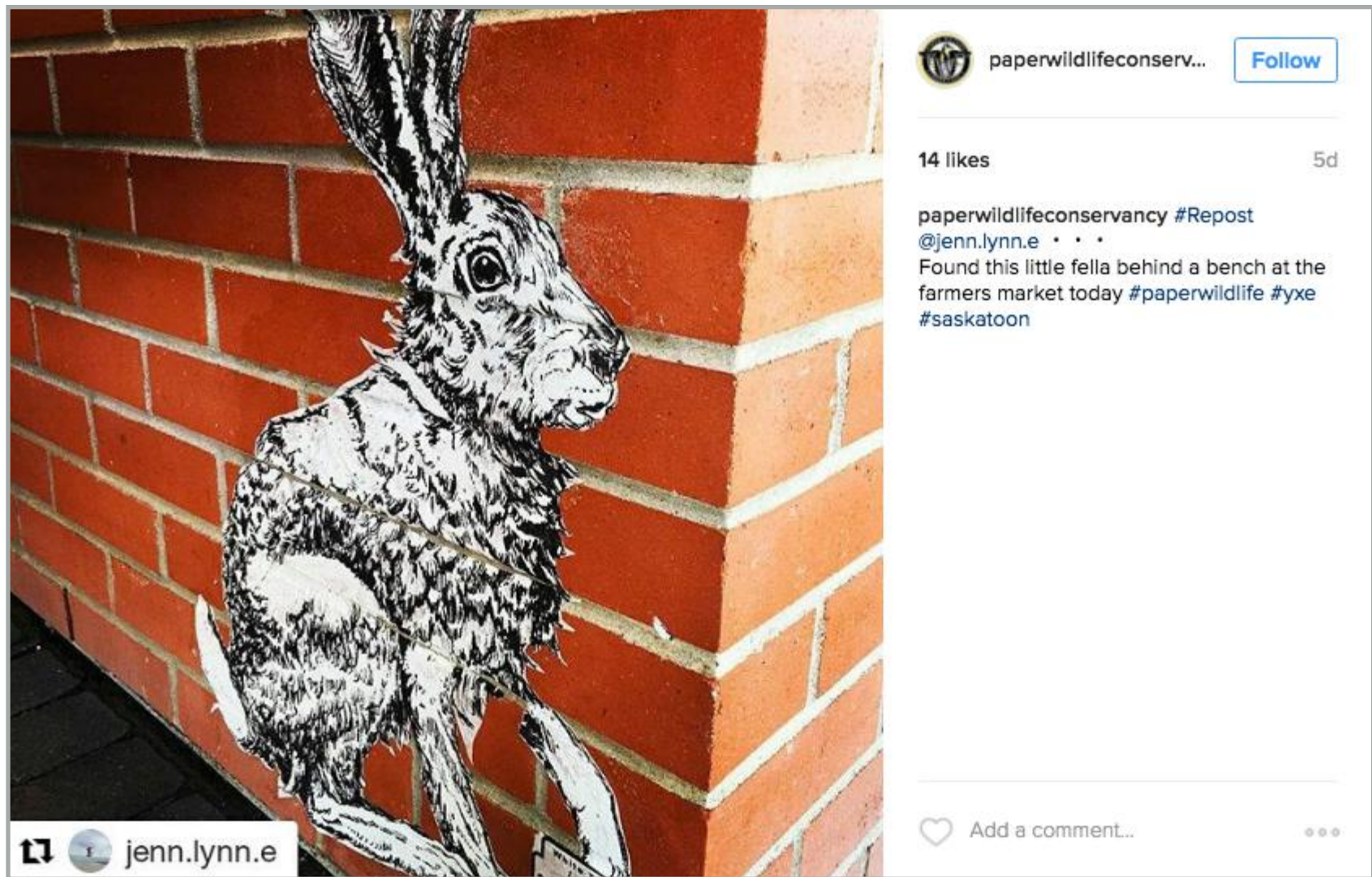
Saskatoon is a city in Canada’s prairie region.

This summer, downtown Saskatoon is hosting the Paper Wildlife Conservancy Project, an initiative started by artist Cate Francis.

Francis created over 150 hand drawn and printed animals that will be released onto predetermined “habitats” located throughout five key business districts in Saskatoon. She wants people to have fun seeking them out but also stop and think about how an urban environment affects its animal inhabitants.

Why This Works

This campaign is a great way to both promote a cause and bring a community together.



SUMMARY

Ready to start building your visual influence strategy?
Here are 3 common threads from the examples we shared:

- **Combine “authentic” earned photos with more aspirational owned photography** to put your destination in front of the travellers and locals you want to reach.
- **Acquire rights to photos shared on social media** to boost visual content without breaking the bank.
- **Share social media photos beyond social** into all digital channels as well as mainstream media and offline channels.



PREVIEW CROWDRIFF FOR YOUR DESTINATION

Congrats - you've made it to the end of this ebook.

What Happens Now? That's Up to You!

We've lifted the curtain to show you a behind-the-scenes look at these creative travel brands, so you can understand what's possible for your destination, too. Refer back to these examples whenever you're looking for a different angle for a visual strategy, or need fresh ideas to help your team engage your following, and increase your customer base.

Curious to learn more about CrowdRiff, or want to work with us?

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