

Case Study- Join the Exodus

EXODUS TRAVEL

“We wanted a place our customers could go when it was raining outside and they couldn’t be bothered to go to the Post Office”



Exodus Travel once sold holidays to hippies – now it sells to the online generation

Thirty years ago, three friends with a shared love of travelling off the beaten track formed a company organising trips for other people to do the same. “It was a travel company catering for hippies who wanted to go to places like Kathmandu and Marrakech,” says marketing director Powell Ettinger who originally joined the company as a trek leader in countries as diverse as Nepal and Morocco.

London-based Exodus Travel has developed into one of the biggest players in its marketplace, specialising in what it likes to call ‘The different holiday’. Exodus offers complete packages to more than 90 countries, its formula being to pick the best activities in a particular country and arrange an itinerary around them. Just as the company has metamorphosed, so has its Web presence. Exodus was an early adopter of the Internet, launching its first website in 1996. The site has been through several incarnations, developing from a simple overview of the company, adding online booking in 2000 and being fully redesigned in August 2004. The only thing that hasn’t changed is its hosting company.

The site was not originally viewed as a marketing tool, “more of a place our customers could go when it was raining outside and they couldn’t be bothered to go to the Post Office,” according to Powell. That has changed, however, with the site now accounting for between 40-45% of the company’s business.

Exodus still retains some of its traditional values. Although deposits are processed online, the remainder of the trip is usually paid for by cheque or direct debit. However, there are a multitude of last-minute bookings that can be made, and any trip that takes place within eight weeks of booking is paid for entirely online. Not bad for a bunch of hippies.

www.exodus.co.uk

