



POWERING TRAVEL | SEASON 2 | EPISODE 2

## Lights, camera, vacation: Where tourism and media meet

### What to listen for:

Listen in to episode two of Powering Travel, featuring guest Dr. Stephen Pratt, host Brandon Ehrhardt, and guest host Angelique Miller.

Join us for an exciting look into the increasing popularity of film-induced tourism and its impact on communities, economies, and travelers worldwide. You'll also gain insights on what entertainment tourism means for the future of travel and sustainable tourism.

Bonus: Get an inside look into Expedia Group's new [shoppable platform](#) and learn how travel content is now bookable.

### Introduction:

[00:00:04] **Brandon** Travel providers are the backbone of the travel experience. In this brand-new season of Powering Travel, we'll dive into industry trends, hot topics, and actionable advice to help business leaders continue evolving and enhancing the travel experience, one trip at a time. Hello again, and welcome back to another episode of Powering Travel. Before I introduce you to today's guest hosts and an interview with our guests, I want to take you on a journey with me. So, take a second, think about a time when you're watching a television show or maybe even a movie, and the locations spoke to you in such a way that you thought, "Hey, how can I get there?" Today's topic is all about the idea of set-jetting or, what the scholars call it, film-induced tourism. In the most recent Expedia Group Traveler Trends Report, we found that two-thirds of global travelers have considered booking trips to destinations after seeing them on shows or movies. And 39 percent have taken the next step to actually book those trips. The guest host we have for you today is Expedia Group's own vice president of Media Studio, Angelique Miller. Welcome, Angelique.

[00:01:15] **Angelique** Hi, Brandon. Thanks for having me today. Look, I've got to tell you, I love this topic. And luckily for me, my day job means that I get to work really closely in this space. So, I'm excited to dive in.

[00:01:30] **Brandon** I love it. I just going to be upfront and honest with you. You have a top-three day job at Expedia Group, so I will put my jealousy to the side. But in order to do that, I would love to hear more about you. So why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do for Expedia Group.

[00:01:45] **Angelique** Sounds good. I mean, you're running a podcast in your spare time, so that's pretty cool.

[00:01:49] **Brandon** That's true.

[00:01:49] **Angelique** So, as Brandon mentioned, I am Angelique Miller. I grew up in America, but I'm based in London now. And I lead our Media Studio team here at Expedia Group. We are Expedia Group's in-house creative agency. What does that mean? It means that we help our brands and partners, such as tourism boards or hotels, connect with audiences through what we consider impactful and memorable content and marketing campaigns. Today, I'm just really excited to dive into this conversation. We are seeing the impact that set-jetting is having on tourism through our direct

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work with our partners over the years, and we really see the impact that set-jetting is having on tourism through the work that we're having directly with our partners, which is why this conversation that we're having today with our guest is so interesting to me. With his experience, I just can't wait to hear what he's got to say.

[00:02:44] **Brandon** Couldn't agree more. Like, who doesn't love talking about TV? Who doesn't love talking about travel? So, today we're talking with someone with years of experience researching this idea of film-induced tourism around the world. Dr. Stephen Pratt has extensive teaching experience in both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the areas of tourism, sustainability, and research methods. Currently, he's a department chair of Tourism Events and Attractions at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management. His research interests include sustainable tourism, development, tourism in small island states, and film tourism. Steve's the co-creator of the popular YouTube channel The Travel Professors. Ready for this one, Angelique?

[00:03:24] **Angelique** Let's go.

## Film tourism & set-jetting:

[00:03:29] **Brandon** As someone who's written several papers about film-induced tourism and the way people travel, can you tell us a little bit about your work and why it's important for travel providers to understand the insights from your work?

[00:03:43] **Dr. Pratt** Yeah, thanks. My interest really came because I love traveling and I love tourism and I love watching films. I'm a film tourist myself and, in that respect, I just wanted to combine the two. So, that was my initial interest in the topic. And then, you know, we have academic freedom to study topics that we're interested in and make a contribution both academically for teaching purposes and also for the industry. So, that was really where it where it sort of came about. And there's so many different and interesting aspects about film and film tourism. No, of course it's a motivation, but it touches so many more things than just going to a place where the film was shot. But there's many others, and film premieres and awards ceremonies, of course, can attract tourists who want to come and see the people on the red carpet. So, it's multi-faceted and has many different types of dimensions.

[00:04:42] **Brandon** What are a few observations regarding the reasons why people are so influenced to seek out the destinations they see in media?

[00:04:49] **Dr. Pratt** It's interesting the sort of popularity of a destination film location. So, it depends on a couple of different things. There's no hard and fast rule, but if there's a book related to it, if the film or the movie's based on a book and people have read the book, then you sort of bring in not only that film tourism but literary tourism as well. And that adds to the hype. So, Lord of the Rings and New Zealand have done a great job in Hobbiton down there of attracting tourists. There's also sort of whether it's an iconic film or a series, because then you're getting that thing reinforced, you're getting the characters reinforced, the place reinforced. And yeah, so if it's a series or a couple of different seasons, like White Lotus — first in Hawaii, then in Italy — or Game of Thrones and then House of Dragon has been huge for places like Ireland and also Croatia, of course, and Iceland, I think it was filmed. They're some of the motivations. More broadly, it's about emotional attachment as well. So, there's some locations where the storyline is a little bit, the location doesn't really matter so much in the storyline. Maybe it's more character driven rather than place driven. So, you know, thinking about Game of Thrones, right, you've got the map in the intro, and you can almost put yourself there. Okay. Your traveling to House of the Undying, for example, Qarth. You know, the King's Road, Dothraki Sea. Those types of places, right? You put yourself in those to some extent. So, the geography is quite important, whereas there's other movies where the scenery is not so important and it's more about the characters.

[00:06:33] **Angelique** We obviously see such an influx in them benefiting from a lot of this tourism entertainment now. But I guess I want to ask, you've just rattled off a ton of different films that have spanned the last 20 years. It does feel that we've hit a bit of a tipping point most recently where there's lots of buzz around this idea of set-jetting, but it's not really new. What are your thoughts on why is it particularly around new shows like White Lotus that has brought this back into kind of such a cultural moment in terms of tourism, or have we just been just writing this way for a really long time?

[00:07:10] **Dr. Pratt** I think we have been riding the wave for quite a long time, and I think the breadth of different destinations has really expanded in the last, let's say, 10 years. So even maybe 20 years ago, it was mostly based in the U.S and especially in the UK. So, lots of the period pieces like Pride and Prejudice that was shot in Chelsea, for example, and a lot of the estate homes, which was also Downton Abbey, which I did a paper on. But, you know, Sense and Sensibility. So, all those Jane Austen type films, the period pieces, there were, I guess, an attraction in their own. But by having the film set there just added the emotional gravitas or the connection that people had with the destination because they had been following along the characters growing up or at least developing the different relationships.

[00:07:59] **Brandon** This might be a little bit of a difficult question to answer. It's something Angelique and I are going to touch on later in the episode, because it's hard to attribute when someone shows up at the Four Seasons in Sicily. Are they there because of the White Lotus or are they there because of the destination? So, from your experience and in your expertise, what was the first film or television show that really drove this concept of set-jetting at scale?

[00:08:26] **Dr. Pratt** Some of the first papers, academic papers on this topic were things like Field of Dreams. People wanted to go and see where Kevin Costner was there with the baseball, setting up the baseball field. So, this was one of the first films that people started to talk about. Field of Dreams, Steel Magnolias. These are some of the early films that drove visitation.

[00:08:51] **Angelique** Maybe it's Kevin Costner who's driving film tourism. He's been, you know...

[00:08:55] [00:08:55] **Brandon** Call of the Wild. [0.5s]

[00:08:57] [00:08:57] **Angelique** Call of the Wild. [0.1s] Yellowstone. Maybe he's the catalyst for this. It's all about Kevin Costner.

[00:09:02] **Dr. Pratt** Big names certainly add to that. To answer your question, we've sort of categorized it in three groups. So, first there's the sort of die-hard, pun intended, film tourists. They love the film, and they're really booking the ticket and the hotel to go and visit the location, for example. And then there's sort of the other people that they might be in Hawaii anyway. You know, they want to surf or they want to do many other things. But they're there, they're interested. They've seen the series, and they want to go and visit the places, you know, then they're sort of incidental. So, they didn't know anything about it, but they got there and then started to find out about it. And some of the destinations to touch on, what you're talking about, Angelique, is having to leverage that. So, again, to the UK example, movie maps, one of the first destination marketing organizations or management organizations to utilize or leverage film tourism was UK and putting out these movie maps where tourists can self-drive and go and see different locations where the films are set.

[00:10:04] **Angelique** I'd love to get your opinion on the die-hard film tourist because for me that's an interesting cohort of people that are potentially going into a destination where those individuals don't look like the normal tourist that would go. I say this because I was reading a paper on the effects of tourism into parts of Ireland and some of the Scottish Isle of Mull. They're used to tourists that are looking for peace, calm, a slow holiday. And then you get a different group of individuals coming in for very, very different reasons. And it, do you think that that sort of shifts maybe in a negative

way how they're impacting those local environments, and what does that destination actually have to do to then shift to cater to these new groups of tourists?

[00:10:51] **Dr. Pratt** It's a big issue some years ago now, but in Ireland there was the kids TV show series called Balamory. I don't know if you remember that.

[00:11:00] **Angelique** That I was reading about.

[00:11:01] **Dr. Pratt** But all the different stakeholders, including the local community probably first and foremost, but also the destination management organization and tourism businesses themselves really need some sort of coordinated effort to manage. You know, it's about the experience economy, right? And they want to go there and see inside or dress up as their favorite characters or say the lines, shoot on TikTok there. If they catch cries from the different destinations, right? Everybody gets really moved to the next level in terms of the types of experiences that they want. And part of that is related to the novelty of it. That's a driver, the prestige, posting on Instagram and TikTok, Facebook maybe for the oldest oldies to show off and say that they were there.

### The benefit to local economies:

[00:11:49] **Brandon** And this is big business. So, I think it would be great to kind of double-click here. How does entertainment tourism impact the local economies? And then, balancing for the negative impacts of over tourism, what are some locations that have done this well?

[00:12:05] **Dr. Pratt** Yeah. So, the benefits, as we expect, including the multiplier effect, of course, they have a lot of supply chains. Usually, in entertainment it's a little bit different to your usual tourist. They're getting out and about, they're visiting the location, so they need transport probably more than your typical sort of hotel or resort-based tourists who tend to stay on property a little bit more. So, there's that sort of impact, which of course means creating jobs, open to entrepreneurship. So, many sort of business-minded people are creating tours or engaging in tour guides — superfans, really, that are turned into tour guides that can help tell the story because we talk about the experience economy, but it's also telling us stories. It's about interacting. It's about talking to the locals, how was it when the film companies were there? What was it like before? What sort of legacy did they leave? In terms of the negatives, there's fairly some of the more frequently done strategies would be things like setting up the film festivals at different times of the year or the non-busy times of the year on the shoulder seasons, maybe the summer tourists are already going to be coming to the place. And so we want to almost the market those busy times and create events and festivals and promotions and tie movie tie-ins or film tie-ins in the shoulder seasons or even the off season.

[00:13:36] **Brandon** You know, nearly every movie is set in a location, whether it's actually filmed there or not. What do you think drives the distinction in a traveler's mind that says, that's somewhere I want to go? Is it the quality of filming? Is it the stories of the characters, as you alluded to earlier? What is sparking that wanderlust in a traveler's mind?

[00:13:58] **Dr. Pratt** I think in films, the cinematography has quite a lot to do with it, how it's portrayed. So, for example, I was a professor in Fiji for four years and Survivor has been set there maybe for the last 10 seasons, for example. And, of course, there's a lot of b-roll and they're doing the activities, they're doing their challenges, and they're voting people out. And I think tourists, again, it's a series. People just want to see it. And that's quite unusual. I mean, there hasn't been that many films or series shot in Fiji over time. I think there's destinations that are famous anyway. So, for example, Empire State Building or Eiffel Tower. And so, yeah, there can be some films shot there, but it's maybe a little bit more difficult to have a pure film tourism experience. They're already well known, although, depending on the film or the series, then there's an association with it. You know, I did the paper on Highclere Castle in the UK, which was where Downton Abbey was set. It was already a stately home people were visiting. Again, the geography aspect came into it. Even inside that house, right, there there was the upstairs, the aristocrats. And then there was the downstairs, the sort of servants. So, that geography aspect came into it. And I think that also impacts how it's shot and how it's filmed. I guess one of the interesting twists on this is if the film has a

negative story. So, if it's a horror film, for example, a film, it's still fiction, but it's sort of shot in a sort of negative light, and that's where it becomes even more fascinating. So, some of the destination marketing organizations, they will sign something that say you cannot — I know this for a fact in Fiji — it's a film Fiji won't allow, we'll need to read the scripts, essentially. Won't allow any negative portrayal of the country in any of the films. I did a paper on them on Borat, the first Borat. And I mean, that was just so fascinating because Sacha Baron Cohen, he only chose Kazakhstan because Americans didn't know about it. It could have been Tajikistan. It could have been Kyrgyzstan. They happened to pick Kazakhstan. It was banned in Kazakhstan. You know, people found out about it. And then it raised the profile of it. And I argue in the paper that people actually wanted to go to Kazakhstan to see what the real Kazakhstan was like. They knew it was a mockumentary. They knew it was a farce. And interestingly, even that the opening scenes of the village that was supposed to be Kazakhstan was shot in Romania. So it was like a replacement location anyway. By the time the second one came along, the Kazakhstan marketing and government, they got along board with it and they saw the joke and shared the joke and used the film to promote, let's say, the real Kazakhstan. This, I think, was an extremely interesting case study of the impacts of film tourism, driving tourists there in a replacement, in a negative light, but still still had some benefits. And then the twist at the end when the sequel comes out and then they jump on board and say Kazakhstan is nice, in the sort of Borat sort of [00:17:23]voice. [0.0s]

## Where DMOs come in:

[00:17:24] **Angelique** I'd like to talk a little bit about now that you brought up the governments' involvement and particularly in our industry, the tourist boards' involvement, and in these scenarios. Naturally, we know that the destination marketing organization benefits organically from something that's been filmed that they have absolutely nothing to do with or a government hasn't had anything to do with it. In your experience, how does that work on that side? Do some governments do a better job of enticing film companies to film in certain locations? What's the dynamic between the push and pull to potentially, you know, I guess another example would be the third season of White Lotus. I'd imagine there was a clamor for where that was going to be filmed next. And, how does, potentially, I think Thailand is on the books. How does it end up there, and what's the dynamic between these government organizations and the film companies trying to make that symbiotic?

[00:18:25] **Dr. Pratt** Yeah, it's a big risk. It's a huge risk because they don't know to what extent the film is going to be popular and drive tourists. But the film credits are all given up front, right? So, many destinations give very attractive and lucrative tax credits for hosting a film being shot in their location. It's a big gamble, and you know it took millions of dollars in tax credits to try to attract film crews and directors to choose to film in those locations. I mean, Thailand is a very interesting case because they've already had experience with The Beach with Leonardo DiCaprio, right? And they had to close the beach because it became so popular.

[00:19:12] **Brandon Ehrhardt** I actually was lucky enough to visit the beach before it was closed. And I think the concerns that you're raising are so valid. And as we think about what's next, I think one of the opportunities for the destination organization is after it's filmed and before its premiere, before it's launched, what does that planning process look like? And Angelique and Steve, I think you guys are both positioned to help answer this question. But I think for the audience's perspective, how can they best prepare when they are predicting there will be this onslaught of tourism that's generated by the show or the movie?

[00:19:50] **Angelique** I would expect destinations to prepare in the way that they would for any onset. And I think that has a lot to do with all of the other things that we're talking about in the industry now, sustainability, accessibility, I think is a big one, ensuring that there are the removing of barriers for anyone who wants to try to travel to that destination, not just from a financial limitations standpoint, but ensuring that that destination feels open, it feels welcome, that the local communities are open and welcoming to the potential onset of visitors coming in. So, I would expect that the same rules apply when you know what a particular destination is trying to increase their tourism levels.

[00:20:38] **Dr. Pratt** I think with the tie-in, you need it to be congruent, right? It needs to be a match. So, New Zealand never had the slogan 100 percent pure for a long time. And now if you watch Lord of the Rings, of course, the scenery is amazing. It's out in the open. They're utilizing the resources that they have, and I guess that's why it was filmed there, but tying it all in together. So, I think that's also important that any future tie-ins or promotion of the film to motivate people to come to the

destination also has to be congruent or in unison or at least teamed well with already the destination image and the destination attributes that it has there. So, I think, just being fairly holistic is good advice.

## Next up for destination tourism:

[00:21:26] **Brandon** Let's talk about what's next. So, based on current popular TV shows and movies, let's put our predictive hats on. Steve, what do you think the destinations are they're going to be trending next?

[00:21:38] **Dr. Pratt** Yeah, there's still the major aspect that we've seen post-COVID. People are still a little bit concerned about how busy things are and return to nature, tying in...I think what we're really going to be seeing is tying in the technology. So, all the AI and the VR related to movies and how they can tie it in. I think that's going to be important. So, in terms of destinations. Yeah. I mean, I'd like to see. I'm biased, but I'd like to see Australia, New Zealand still have a lot to offer in terms of unique scenery. I think it also, it still really depends on the story and the characters. I think that they can be set in many different places. But if you got the hook with the tie-in, if people are identifying with the characters, then the scenery, the geography really enhances it.

[00:22:35] **Brandon** Angelique, how about you? I'm going to ask you the same question. What's coming next?

[00:22:40] **Angelique** I mean, it is an impossible question to answer. I mean, I do think that if White Lotus is filmed in Thailand, that's going to definitely peak. You know, I would like to see some of the countries that have been closed for a very long time that haven't seen the recovery from the pandemic. The Asian countries that are just starting to open back up. So, a lot of people kind of getting into Japan again. And with those borders lifting, I think that there's potentially an opportunity for those destinations to capitalize on this new sort of surge of interest in film tourism. I agree with Stephen. I'm also interested in the technology. And I think that technology is going to be able to help us understand the destinations that we're watching in these films and allow us to consider them faster, better, easier. We're not potentially looking at where was this from? Did you watch something four years ago and then you had to go and search a hundred different places, like where was that filmed? I'd imagine that it was harder to figure out where Game of Thrones was filmed and pre-shot in Ireland, etc. than perhaps it would be now with some of the interactive functionality that you have on Netflix and Amazon Prime and how do we connect to that usability and using technology to help make visitation to these destinations that you're consuming that much easier.

[00:24:11] **Brandon** Last one for me. I want to prove out this concept of wanderlust. So, we're going to do a little bit of a round robin. We'll start with Steve. We'll go to Angelique, and I'll finish this off. What is the one location that you've seen in a TV show or movie that you want to travel to but have not yet?

[00:24:26] **Dr. Pratt** Oh, my goodness. Well, I mean, I haven't been to Mexico yet, so I want to see the Mayan and the Incas, the pyramids. And yeah, so Mexico is on. I'm very relatively close here in Orlando. So, yeah, I can't wait to get to Mexico. It's been on my list for a long time.

[00:24:47] **Angelique** Brandon, I think for me, the destination that was never on my radar was Montana, Wyoming, Utah. I just, you know, I'm an American. I live in London now, but it's just never been a part of the U.S. that I was remotely interested in seeing and, having binged on Yellowstone for the last couple of months, it is number one on the list for us to go and rent a big ranch house on Vrbo and take my son, who's obsessed with dinosaurs, to a potential paleontology dig and just see those sweeping landscapes. So that, for me, it would never have been one that I thought, and it's I guess an example of how powerful TV can be to change your mindset.

[00:25:38] **Brandon** Yes, I believe we have some of the inventory from Yellowstone on Vrbo.



[00:25:41] **Angelique** I know. I've bookmarked it. Yeah.

[00:25:44] **Brandon** You're checking it daily. Gosh, you know, hand up, guilty as charged. I was one of those people that searched, "where is White Lotus filmed." Might need to bank a little bit of OneKeyCash before I head off that way. So, I'm going to keep it domestic. The place that I really wanted to go to, I watched Kyle Chandler and Bloodline when that first came out on Netflix pre-pandemic and I said, the Keys look amazing. I need to make that my next destination. There's recently been some nonstop flights added from Chicago, so I think my next stop is going to be the Keys. But yeah, there are so many different destinations when we all saw different countries and you said Mexico, like the amazing scene at the end of Shawshank Redemption comes to mind and say what may who and it's just clear there's so much opportunity for destination management organizations and the travel industry as a whole to get behind TV and film. And this has just been a really exciting and enjoyable conversation for me. So, thanks a lot to you both for making this fun and valuable.

[00:26:47] **Dr. Pratt** Excellent. Thanks, Brandon.

## Final thoughts and key takeaways:

[00:26:52] **Brandon** Dr. Pratt. So insightful when it comes to this kind of travel that, again, it's not necessarily a new thing, but definitely has a huge impact on destinations and their economies.

[00:27:03] **Angelique** You're right. I also love that he touched on both positive and negative impacts of film-induced tourism. We don't really always hear about the negative side of things, and I particularly thought the research that he's done on the film Borat was really fascinating and the impact that it had on Kazakhstan.

[00:27:21] **Brandon** Yes, I did not plan on talking about Borat on the Powering Travel podcast, for sure. But I do think this is a great time for us to talk about some very relevant new work that's coming out of your team. And it's related to that discussion that we had with Dr. Pratt.

[00:27:37] **Angelique** Oh, yes. Well, we did recently announce a new tool that whilst I believe I might be a little biased, I believe it's quite innovative in this particular space.

[00:27:48] **Brandon** Well, I think the facts speak for themselves. So, this is an industry-first product and platform. So, can you explain why and how it's so unique?

[00:27:57] **Angelique** Sure. So, my team at Expedia Group Media Solutions have created the first-ever advertising and travel technology platform of its kind. What does that actually mean besides a bunch of industry jargon? What we're hoping to deliver here is a travel technology platform that is giving travelers the tools to shop and book travel as they're watching this travel content. So, essentially making everything that we're talking about today, that entertainment tourism, actually bookable. The reality is, for listeners out there, there's no shortage of travel content in the world in our industry. The reality is also that our partners spend a lot of time, they spend a lot of money producing this content. But the return on the investment, the ROI on that content, particularly, that high-value entertainment tourism, it's notoriously hard to measure. So, the ambition here is that this new technology is essentially giving not just a benefit to the traveler, right, but it's giving our partners a new way to track measurement and be actually able to attribute the value of that content back to bookings. Using the shoppable platform technology, we've essentially created a channel for all of their incredible content to be shopped. It's called Go USA and it's featuring brand-new essays, inspirational travel content. It features interactive maps, it features inspirational itineraries and really showcases the breadth and depth of travel content across the diversity of the states and simultaneously gives travelers a way to book those hotels experiences insights all while the content is being viewed in real time.

[00:29:55] **Brandon** Cool. Let me make sure I got it. So old world, I'm watching a TV show. I see a hotel or location that I like. I then have to go Google where it was shot and then hopefully someone has put the hotel and then I've got to go to the Expedia app and shop the hotel. Tell me about this experience.

[00:30:14] **Angelique** Well, it's a one-stop shop for all of that now. And I think of when we were sitting in some ideation and creative sessions, the beginning of what this could look like, that was essentially what we had in mind. We knew that we were travelers ourselves. And there was an opportunity to help a traveler through that journey so they didn't have to go and try to find out where that was filmed or where it was specifically. And with Expedia and the power of our technology, our supply partners were able to bring that all into one place to make it really seamless for someone to bring that trip to a reality.

[00:30:51] **Brandon** So, it sounds like this platform meets the traveler at the inspiration phase of their travel hopping journey.

[00:30:58] **Angelique** It does, and it very quickly connects to that next step, that action. With all of that in mind, we do feel there's a huge opportunity for us to work differently with our partners, really connecting that inspirational phase to travel planning. I think some companies focus specifically on that. Some of our competitors are busier focusing on end transactions, and we do think that with this new technology, we're able to do both.

[00:31:29] **Brandon** Yeah, I love that. So, we've taken a lot of the work out of finding out the hotel. We've removed some friction from the traveler experience. Tell me the specific ways partners are going to benefit from developing something like this for their destinations.

[00:31:42] **Angelique** It's about storytelling, right? This platform is going to enable marketers to tell stories about these amazing and breathtaking destinations in new creative ways. We are hopefully breaking some boundaries in this entertainment tourism space, pushing beyond what we've seen for years around very typical editorial storytelling. And because film and TV is such a powerful motivator of travel and this new technology allows destinations to bring their places to life through different types of content, we're really focusing more to that mid- to long-form video content that isn't advertising. It is content in the sense that is grounded in storytelling.

[00:32:30] **Brandon** How should destinations be thinking about what is marketable and unique for them to tap into a media development standpoint? Like, how do you take that first step?

[00:32:39] **Angelique** Well, it's a great question. It's a big challenge, right, because everyone's trying to stand out in a very saturated, oversaturated environment. But the thing is, is that destinations all have a unique offering that can be built into a marketable content strategy. But what I feel really passionately about, and what I do believe this is kind of hitting or ticking the boxes worth is, is how we have to be smarter and more innovative about the way in which we advertise to audiences. No one wants to be spoken at through outdated advertising channels. Instead, it's about building an environment that's grounded in loyalty, is grounded in trust advocacy. That happens because you are initiating a dialog, a communication layer with them. And that's the real step change here with platforms like this.

[00:33:43] **Brandon** Yeah. And it doesn't all have to be about volume either, right? I think part of this is introducing new locations to travelers who will not be able to find them on their own, right? So, do you think about this innovative way of creating shop or content for destinations that can also support the destination sustainability efforts? So, can you tell us a little bit more how that happens?

[00:34:04] **Angelique** Yeah. Sustainability is hugely important to us, whether it's the way in which we're creating content for our partners, we want to make sure that we're having as least an impact on the environment as we can. We also do understand for our partners that dispersal is important. So, not just sending everyone to the same big city where over-



tourism is already an issue. It's about uncovering those other hidden gems and getting people to go and explore beyond what they know. This platform allows us to work with partners in a way that helps evangelize and advocate for those less trouble spots. One example is some of the content you'll see on the Go USA platform is around getting more awareness away from, for example, places in California, Yosemite, Carmel, Monterey. They've for years experienced over-tourism, and it's about bringing to life other things and other stories that are going to inspire dispersal and lead into that sustainability message.

[00:35:00] **Brandon** Can you tell us a little bit more about the content value initiative? So, what is it? Why is it important for anyone that produces content and wants to market their product or destination?

[00:35:10] **Angelique** Again, I touched on this a little bit earlier when I started talking about the return on investment and how it's really hard to measure the value of content. So, this is where I start to geek out of it. I mean, I think it is really cool. The Content Value Initiative is a newly formed grassroots organization formed by the Brand USA. They've invited key players in the travel and hospitality space to help address that very thing, the complexities of measuring the impact of content in the travel industry. We are excited to be part of this initiative and by giving our partners the ability to track and measure the impact of this content, which we believe this platform is going to do, is going to be a key step in the industry's aim to create a standardized measurement for the impact and value of that content and its impact on travel booking decisions. So, it's all still very much in its infancy, so definitely more to come.

[00:36:10] **Brandon** I love it. All right. I'm going to ask you a question now. There's like absolutely no way, based on the past 30 minutes we've spent together, that you have any free time to watch television. But if I were to drop you on the location or set of any famous TV show or movie and you had to live there forever, which location and show would you pick?

[00:36:32] **Angelique** Well, that's a good question, Brandon. I mean, it's we talked a little bit about it with Dr. Pratt. But right now, I mean, White Lotus is all that comes to mind. If I could be Jennifer Coolidge for the rest of my life on the set of White Lotus, I think I would be living my real dream job. Not the dream job I have currently.

[00:36:52] **Brandon** Yes. Gosh, that I just picture you as Jennifer Coolidge. And just season two got so much more special for me on White Lotus. That's awesome. So good to have you. Thank you so much for joining us.

[00:37:05] **Angelique** Thanks, Brandon, and pleasure to be here.

[00:37:09] **Brandon** We'll be linking to some resources in the show description if you'd like to learn more about this new shoppable TV platform. Thanks again for joining us for season two of the Powering Travel podcast. We want to hear from you, so connect with us at Powering [Travel@ExpediaGroup.com](mailto:Travel@ExpediaGroup.com). Email address is [poweringtravel@ExpediaGroup.com](mailto:poweringtravel@ExpediaGroup.com) All one word: poweringtravel. Subscribe to get notified when new episodes are live and be sure to rate and review the show. It's how people find the show. Thank you so much for listening. We got a couple of great guests, and I'm looking forward to hearing what you all think about this one. We'll see you next time. This is Powering Travel podcast. I'm Brandon Ehrhardt.