

The Cook Islands map out a new strategy with Unified ID 2.0, welcoming new audiences and greater results

CASE STUDY

Advertiser



Agency

BENCH

Method

Unified ID 2.0, lookalike audience strategy



RESULTS

14%

decrease in
cost per click

60%

increase in
conversions

ATTRACTING TRAVELLERS ACROSS THE WORLD WITH A DATA-DRIVEN STRATEGY

Pristine beaches, coral reefs, and clear lagoons – the Cook Islands are picture-perfect as a vacation destination. In fact, tourism is the tiny island nation's biggest industry. But it still has to compete with larger, better-known South Pacific travel destinations for tourist dollars.

When the post-pandemic resurgence in international travel hit in 2022, Cook Islands Tourism wanted to leverage this opportunity. They needed to find innovative ways to gain a competitive edge. So the government agency turned to Bench to put the Cook Islands on the map for tourists, creating greater awareness and increasing the number of visitors from its two biggest tourist markets, New Zealand and Australia.

As a strong advocate of data-driven advertising, Bench chose The Trade Desk as its demand-side platform to bring its innovative multilayered strategy for the Cook Islands to life.

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LEVERAGING FIRST-PARTY DATA TO RESONATE AND ENGAGE WITH AUDIENCES

Bench's strategy leveraged The Trade Desk's platform to programmatically deliver ads across key open-internet channels like display, high-impact display, and broadcast video on demand (BVOD).

In addition, the platform supported Bench's complex targeting strategy as well. Reaching out to a wide range of audiences such as tropical travellers, honeymooners, families looking to travel, and other key contextual segments across Australia and New Zealand.

Designed to maximise reach to these target groups in a cost-effective way, the main campaign drove user traffic and engagement on Cook Islands Tourism's website. And it was supplemented by tactical campaigns promoting special deals to boost flight sales to the island nation.

With the end of third-party cookies drawing near, Bench and Cook Islands Tourism were well aware of the importance of first-party data in improving targeting, engaging audiences, and optimising ad spend.

So they knew that the tourism agency's email database was crucial for this strategy – running subscription campaigns in Australia and New Zealand to continually drive new subscribers, adding more first-party data to its customer relationship management (CRM) system.

IDENTIFYING NEW KEY AUDIENCES WITH UNIFIED ID 2.0

What's key to this campaign's success? The team recognised the potential of the Unified ID 2.0 (UID2) solution to build on their strategy. An open-source identity framework for advertisers and publishers, UID2 also aims to give consumers far greater control of their data and privacy as compared to third-party cookies.

When advertisers create a unique pseudonymous, anonymous UID2 identifier using hashed and encrypted email addresses, it allows them to maintain current media strategies in a cookie-free environment. UID2 also supports a wide variety of devices and channels across the open internet, including websites, mobile apps, and streaming platforms.

To activate the UID2 solution, The Trade Desk's team worked with Bench to upload the high-quality first-party data from Cook Islands Tourism's CRM system to the platform. This data was then used as a seed audience for lookalike (LAL) targeting, helping to reach new consumers who share similar qualities and interests with current email subscribers.

AMPLIFYING CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE WITH LOOKALIKE AUDIENCES

The UID2 LAL audience strategy was very successful, uncovering new audiences that were most engaged with Cook Islands Tourism's content. In addition, refreshing the first-party data set with new data had a multiplying effect on the campaign too. The Trade Desk's team supported Bench in refining and building new relevant audiences, uploading CRM data more frequently, and improving performance while the campaign was live.

With key audience insights, The Trade Desk's platform also enabled the campaign team to identify how audience groups responded to different content. For example, those interested in 'luxury holiday' were more likely to engage with luxury-related images and messaging. This allowed the team to know whom the brand was talking to and what they resonated most with, customising creative content to further improve performance.

As a result, the campaign achieved greater reach, website traffic, and on-site engagement. And it did so very efficiently – cost per click to landing pages for a UID2 LAL audience was 14 percent lower compared to a cookie-based LAL audience. It also delivered on what matters most to the brand, amplifying conversions by 60 percent and generating more flight sales to the Cook Islands.

Now Cook Islands Tourism has a sophisticated, sustainable marketing strategy that also put them on the map as a South Pacific paradise for travellers around the world.

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“Bench helped us to understand the importance of first-party data, so we were blown away by how precisely the UID2 solution helped us use that data to identify new lookalike audiences. Now we have a long-term strategy that we can use to attract more tourists to the Cook Islands in a cost-effective way.”

**Rachel Mackey, Marketing Manager,
Cook Islands Tourism**