

# Beyond demographics: How travel brands reach the new older consumer

Longer lives, bigger trips, and the changing psychology of travel decision-making.

Abi Best & Tara Schwenk



Lemongrass



# The challenges we help travel brands navigate



WILD FRONTIERS

**SELECTIVE**  
**āSIA**



**SteppesTravel**



Reaching  
new audiences



AI visibility &  
discoverability



Brand authority  
& trust



Market entry,  
growth & expansion



Increase shoulder  
season bookings



Reputation &  
profile building



Competitive  
differentiation



THE CONSCIOUS  
TRAVEL FOUNDATION



# What we will cover today



Why Demographics  
don't work

---



The changing  
decision making  
journey

---



How to build  
trust

---



5 things you  
should be doing  
now

---

The 'problem' with the 'over-50s' demographic...



Lemongrass

Same age ≠ same mindset

Today's older travellers are:

- adventurous
- digitally fluent
- experience-led
- identity-driven
- highly segmented



People don't experience themselves as demographic categories.

# We are entering the era of longer lives and more meaningful travel



## Longevity

People are living longer. Average lifespan now reaches 84–87 years in countries like Monaco, Japan and Singapore.



## Wellness

Wellness is booming. The global wellness economy hit \$6.8T in 2024 and is projected to reach \$9.8T by 2029.



## Spending power

Healthier for longer. More older consumers are staying active, mobile and experience-driven.



## Longer trips, luxury activities

Older travellers go further. 24% of healthy older travellers visit multiple countries per trip vs 20% of younger affluent travellers.

This is not a niche audience. It is becoming the dominant high-value travel audience.

# We are entering the era of longer lives and more meaningful travel

## Traditional travel marketing

Inspire

Promote

Target demographics

Focus on reach

Campaign-led

## Marketing to today's older traveller

Reassure

Educate

Target motivations

Focus on trust

Authority-led

Lemongrass

People connect through:

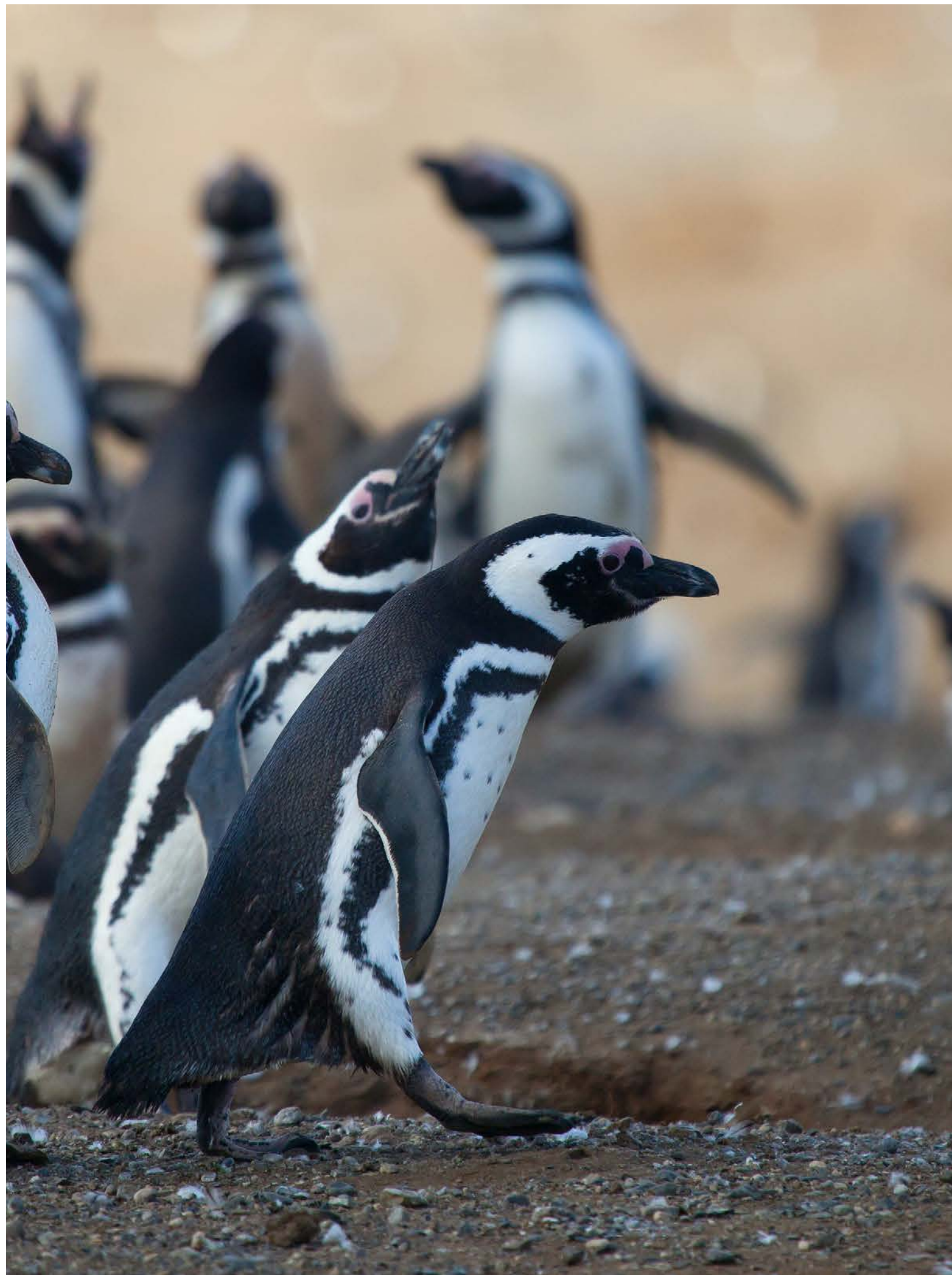
- passions
- values
- humour
- identity
- aspiration
- community
- purpose

NOT demographic labels.



## What marketers often get wrong about older travellers...

- ✗ They are price sensitive
- ✓ They are risk sensitive
  
- ✗ They don't use technology
- ✓ They use technology differently
  
- ✗ They want senior travel
- ✓ They want relevant travel
  
- ✗ They need advertising
- ✓ They need confidence to book



The decision-making journey has fundamentally changed.

Why trust matters more  
than ever...





Today's traveller is different. These travellers  
research deeper and expect more.

Lemongrass

Before booking, they will

- compare extensively
- consume more content
- seek reassurance
- value expertise
- trust authority over advertising

This audience doesn't want to be marketed to. They want to feel informed.



Lemongrass

So what?

If they compare more...

→ Make comparison easy.

If they seek reassurance...

→ Increase visible proof.

If they value expertise...

→ Publish expert content.

If they trust authority...

→ Invest in PR, partnerships and reviews.





Lemongrass

## Travel is

- expensive
- emotional
- experiential
- higher risk
- more complex

## Especially

- long-haul
- experiential
- luxury
- active travel

Trust > attention...

Attention may create interest. Trust creates bookings.

# How to build trust...



Lemongrass

Trust is cumulative.

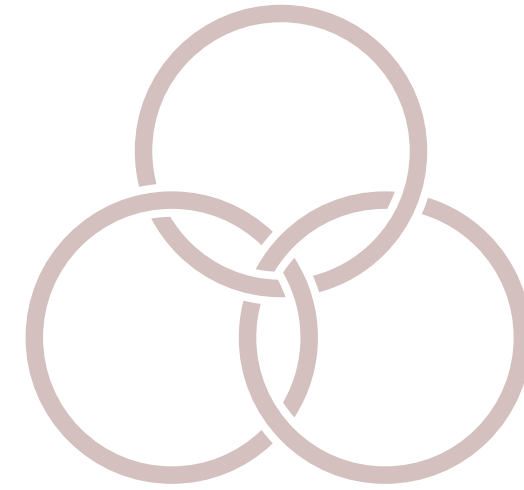


Lemongrass

**NOT**

impressions

noise



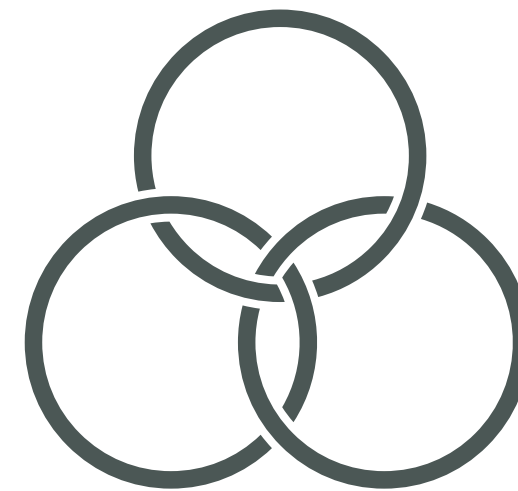
visibility

---

**INSTEAD**

authority

credibility



confidence

Lemongrass

PR is no longer just awareness. It's  
reassurance.

# It is reinforced across...



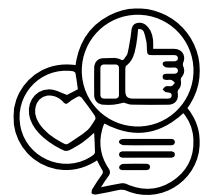
Editorial



Podcasts & TV



Search & AI visibility



Social

Awards



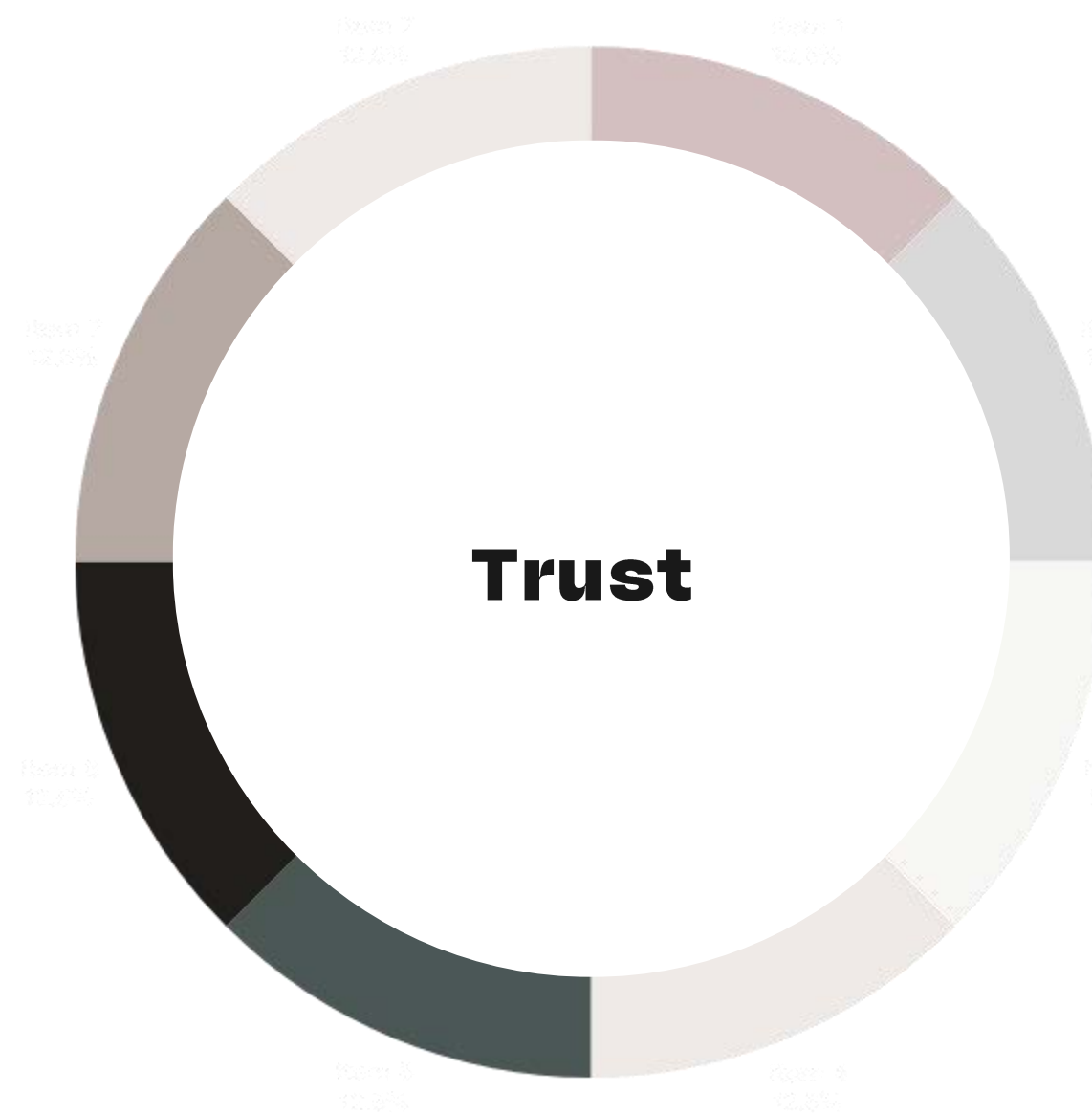
Creator partnerships



Expert commentary



Long-form content



# How to have your own 'Race Across the World' adventure across Central Asia

Interest in tours to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia has increased since featuring on the programme

Amelia Neath

TRAVEL+LEISURE



Camping on the banks of the Rio Aguarico. Credit: Misha Vallejo Prut

In the morning, tribes of howler monkeys were whooping, several As we sat at breakfast, pink dolphins rose in the Río Cocaya. T into the canoe and set off downriver, back to the *Anakonda*, and delight—really my favorite part of this trip—of simply chugging that wonderful river and drinking in the unfolding panorama of banks.

Eight-day trips on the *Anakonda* with [Steppes Travel](#) from \$6,3 person.

A version of this story first appeared in the *F Leisure* under the headline "A Passage to Ar



Five countries that are actively welcoming travellers in 2026

BBC TRAVEL



(Image credit: Getty Images)



"We've seen a sustained rise in demand for Namibia," said Jarrod Kyte, product and sales director at B-Corp tour operator [Steppes Travel](#). "[It's] a destination that delivers dramatic landscapes and profoundly immersive encounters with nature." According to Kyte, few places capture this better than the [NamibRand Nature Reserve](#), a designated Dark Sky Reserve known for exceptionally clear views of the Milky Way.

TRAVEL

Europe UK Worldwide City breaks Hotels Cruise Ski Advice

Explore city breaks, activities...

## The world's greatest wildlife holidays for 2026

Spot polar bears in the Arctic, see black rhinos in Namibia or marvel at the wonders of our own shores on the ultimate nature holiday

Richard Madden

Richard is an award-winning travel writer and the writer, co-writer or ghostwriter of nine books including *Great British Journeys* (National Trust, spring 2026). See more

Published 11 January 2026 7:30am GMT

Related Topics Wildlife, Animals, Luxury travel, School holidays

67

Gift this article free

Add us as preferred source



Wanderlust

INSPIRATION DESTINATIONS MAGAZINE TRAVEL GREEN LIST 2026 NEWS

SUBSCRIBE



## Most exciting trips to China in 2026

With China loosening its visa restrictions, we pick some of the best trips to showcase its wonders

Danny Weller and Gareth Clark

20 March 2026



# Harper's BAZAAR

## The luxury travel trends to know for 2025

Avoiding peak season, seeking out the cold, going it alone and cowboycore – what's shaping how we holiday this year



## Adventure travellers urged to explore Northern Pakistan following visa rule changes



# The Telegraph



## 6 of the world's most remote destinations to test your inner adventurer

Travellers are venturing further than ever before, seeking the path less trodden to test their mettle and totally disconnect from an increasingly modern world. Here are six off-grid experiences to channel that inner adventurer.

## The world's last unexplored places – and how to see them before everyone else

The ultimate bucket list for misanthropes seeking solitude, or wannabe explorers yearning for a proper adventure



# 'Hidden gem' with mountain views is a perfect walking destination for 2025

Travellers who are looking to getaway can get inspiration from Wild Frontiers who have shared their 10 trending hotspots for next year.

# TimeOut

News Things to Do Food & Drink Arts & Culture Travel Movies Music Time Out Market

## These are the world's most beautiful marathons for 2025

Google searches for 'international marathons' have soared by 2800 percent since this time in 2023



Not everyone likes running, but if you've got some jaw-droppingly gorgeous scenery along the way to keep you entertained, the likelihood is that those excruciating 26 miles will be a whole lot more bearable.

Over the last year, there has been a whopping 2800 percent increase in Google searches for 'international marathons' (partly because the London Marathon 2025 garnered more interest than ever, with 840,000 applications) and Wild Frontiers has since released a list of the most beautiful ones in the world.

Lemongrass



The best brands focus on

- passions
- mindset
- lifestyle
- identity
- expertise
- emotional connection

Lemongrass

# 5 things you should be doing now...



1. Know your audience's passions, not their age

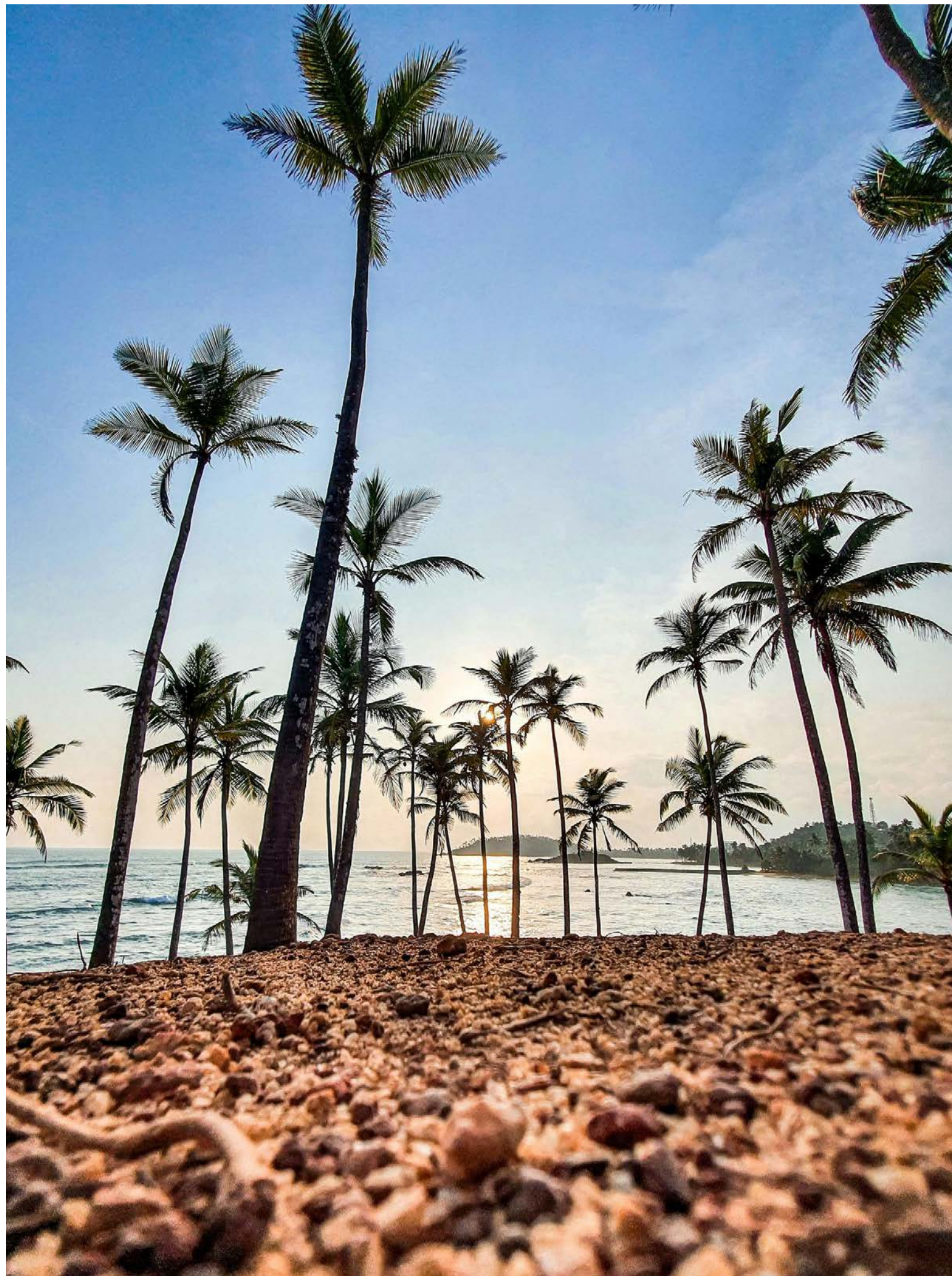
Lemongrass



## Lemongrass

- Adventure seekers
- Wellness travellers
- Food & culture enthusiasts
- Family legacy travellers
- Luxury experience collectors

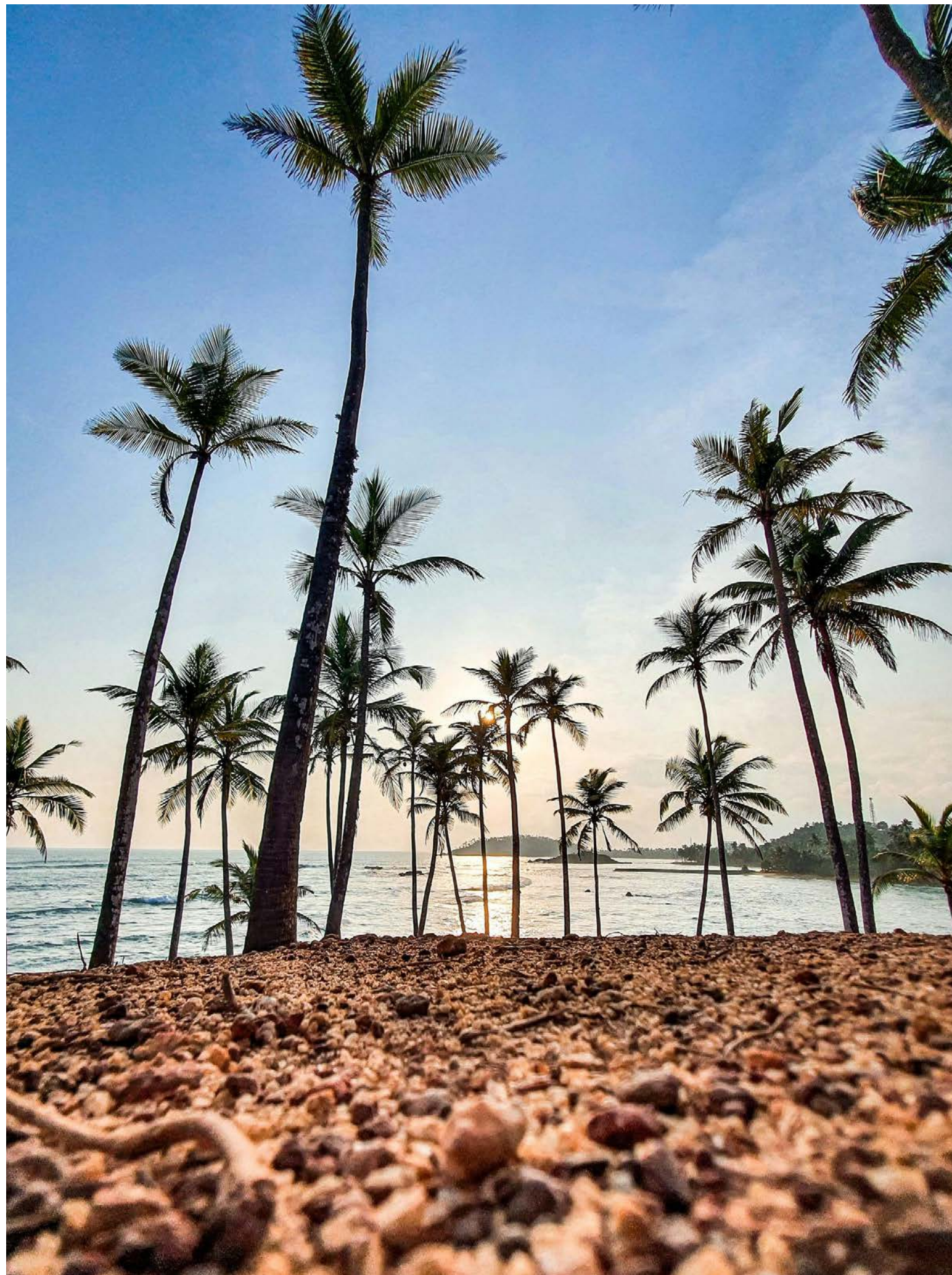
What motivates them? What are they trying to become? What content do they consume?



Lemongrass

Action:

Review your personas and remove age as the primary defining characteristic.



## 2. Become the expert before the booking moment



Lemongrass

Authority is the new advertising.

Expert content → Media coverage →  
Search visibility → Trust → Bookings

Examples of expertise content

- Destination trend reports
- Insider guides
- Local expert interviews
- Wellness insights
- Adventure travel advice
- Travel planning tools



Lemongrass



Action:

Identify the three topics  
your brand should own.

# 3. Make trust visible through proof



## Lemongrass

People don't trust what you say about yourself. They trust what others say about you.

- Awards
- Media coverage
- Customer reviews
- Testimonials
- Industry partnerships
- Expert endorsements
- User-generated content



Lemongrass

Action:

Audit every trust signal currently visible on your website and booking journey.

**Trust is built through accumulation. One mention won't change perception. Consistent proof does.**



# 4. Tell one story everywhere

Lemongrass





Lemongrass

PR coverage



Website



Search



Social



Email



Booking

Each channel reinforcing the same positioning.

Lemongrass

Questions to ask:

- Does our website match our PR narrative?
- Does our imagery support our positioning?
- Do our social channels tell the same story?
- Can AI/search engines easily understand our expertise?

Action:

Choose one core brand story and ensure it appears consistently across every touchpoint.



# 5. Audit your imagery through a trust lens





## Avoid

## Embrace

Generic older couples

Active, experience-led travellers

Age-focused imagery

Interest-focused imagery

Passive holiday scenes

Meaningful experiences

Stereotypes

Diversity of lifestyles

'Senior' marketing

Aspirational storytelling

Lemongrass

The quickest way to lose relevance is to show people an outdated version of themselves.

**Action:**

Review your homepage and top-performing destination pages for age stereotypes.



# 5 clear takeaways

1

Know your audience, their passions and emotional drivers

2

Be an expert and shout about it

3

Awards are a huge driver of trust

4

Consistent storytelling across your platforms

5

Review your use of imagery

The brands that win the older traveller won't necessarily be the loudest. They'll be the most trusted.

# Thank you



[grow@lemongrassmarketing.com](mailto:grow@lemongrassmarketing.com)

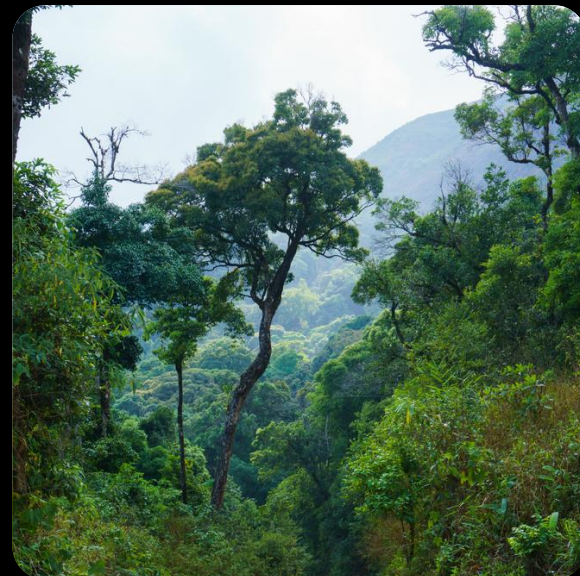


[lemongrassmarketing.com](http://lemongrassmarketing.com)



## Choose a project and cast your vote with Pinwheel


- Greenhouse Gas Destruction
- AgreenaCarbon, Soil Project
- Forest Restoration, Andes
- Regreening, Rainwater Harvesting



Lemongrass




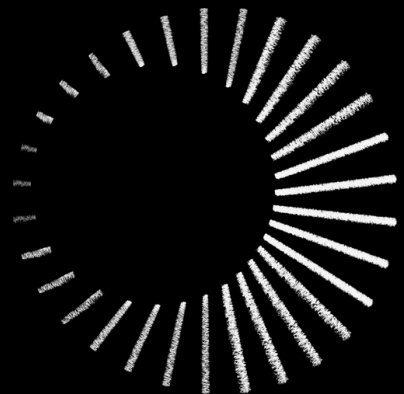
Get in touch

 +44 (0)1865 237 990

 [grow@lemongrassmarketing.com](mailto:grow@lemongrassmarketing.com)

 [www.lemongrassmarketing.com](http://www.lemongrassmarketing.com)

 Perch Eco Business Centre  
Charlotte Avenue  
Bicester  
OX27 8BL



Thank you