

# Tiki the Travel Bot helps travellers navigate personalised trips

Contiki has created a chatbot - Tiki the Travel Bot - on the Facebook Messenger platform to provide a personalised experience by suggesting trips relevant to the users' travel interests and to engage with the brand's audience to understand Contiki's eight ways to travel.



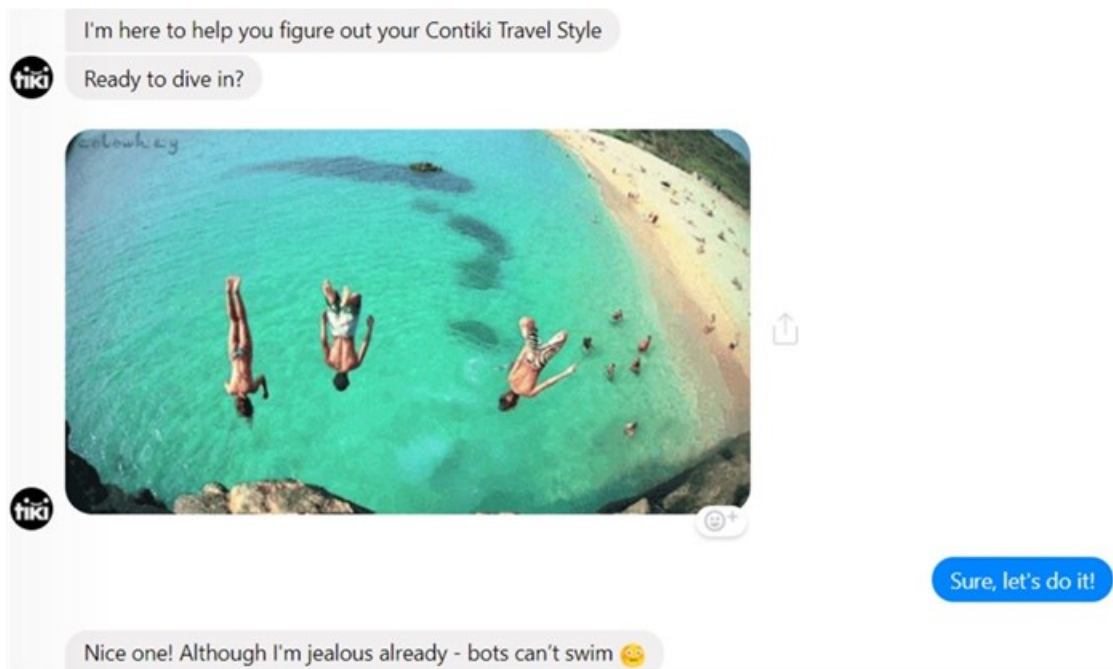
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Contiki introduced its [ways to travel](#) in 2014 in recognition the diverse wants and needs their audience seek from a travel experience, with each travel style offering unique inclusions, pace and accommodation, providing a more personalised experience.

“Our audience is made up of Gen Y & Z,” explains general manager of Contiki South Africa Kelly Jackson. “They aren’t looking for a one size fits all travel experience, and we’ve made a concerted effort to address this through our trips and travel styles. Tiki helps customers navigate our trips and find something that matches their style, allowing them to make an informed choice, and allowing us to deliver an experience that matches their expectations.”

The bot steps users through a number of questions, providing content, imagery and quirky copy to mirror a more natural conversation and combat the stilted behaviour with which chatbots have become synonymous. Tiki, however, is very self-aware, understanding it’s a bot and incorporating this into its humorous tone. According to Mindshare, 75% of consumers want to know whether they’re chatting to a chatbot or a human and 48% find chatbots pretending to be human “creepy”, which Tiki does not, despite being personable.

Users are delivered directly to relevant trips on Contiki, as well as being provided with options like calling a travel expert, requesting a quote, or exploring deals. Data acquired through the app will provide the brand with opportunities to remarket to users with personalised and targeted retail messaging through email and media.



## Five key ways to make your bot a success

In creating Tiki, Contiki assessed the bot landscape and identified shortcomings and mistakes prevalent with the technology. Whether using for customer service, e-commerce, or purely as an engagement device, here are the five key ways to make your bot a success:

- 1. Be the brand:** The bot is just another of your customer facing team, but they're always on the clock. Make sure they represent the brand as they should and deliver beyond that of customers' expectations - surprising and delighting is what it's all about.
- 2. Know your audience:** Do your research, test and retest. Be prepared for all customers as much as you can be, then continue to tweak and adjust with learnings as you go, just as you would with continued training programmes for real staff.
- 3. Be human:** Okay, disclaimer here (see next point), never present as an actual human, but the experience should be as natural as possible - don't make your customers have to learn new ways of communicating or dealing with your brand.
- 4. But not too human:** People are more than happy to interact with bots which are delivering value, and more than happy to stay within the boundaries of what that bot is designed to deliver - but if assuming they are talking with an actual human, people can stray outside of rails and quickly become confused and frustrated when they are not understood.
- 5. Stick to task:** Create clear rails and keep customers on track and on task - get them to know, consider, or do, what you need them to and as they say in showbiz... always leave them wanting more.

Tiki is built on Chatfuel (using a bit of development assistance) and utilises Google Dialogue Flow to manage natural language programming capabilities.

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