ABOUT YOUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

As a small business owner, it's not always easy to differentiate from competitors as basic offerings, location, views, local cuisine and service is usually quite similar. So what is your competitive advantage? Online travel is a highly competitive industry. Knowing who your target audience is, what they're looking for and how their decision-making process is influenced will guarantee an increase in online bookings.

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CONTENTS

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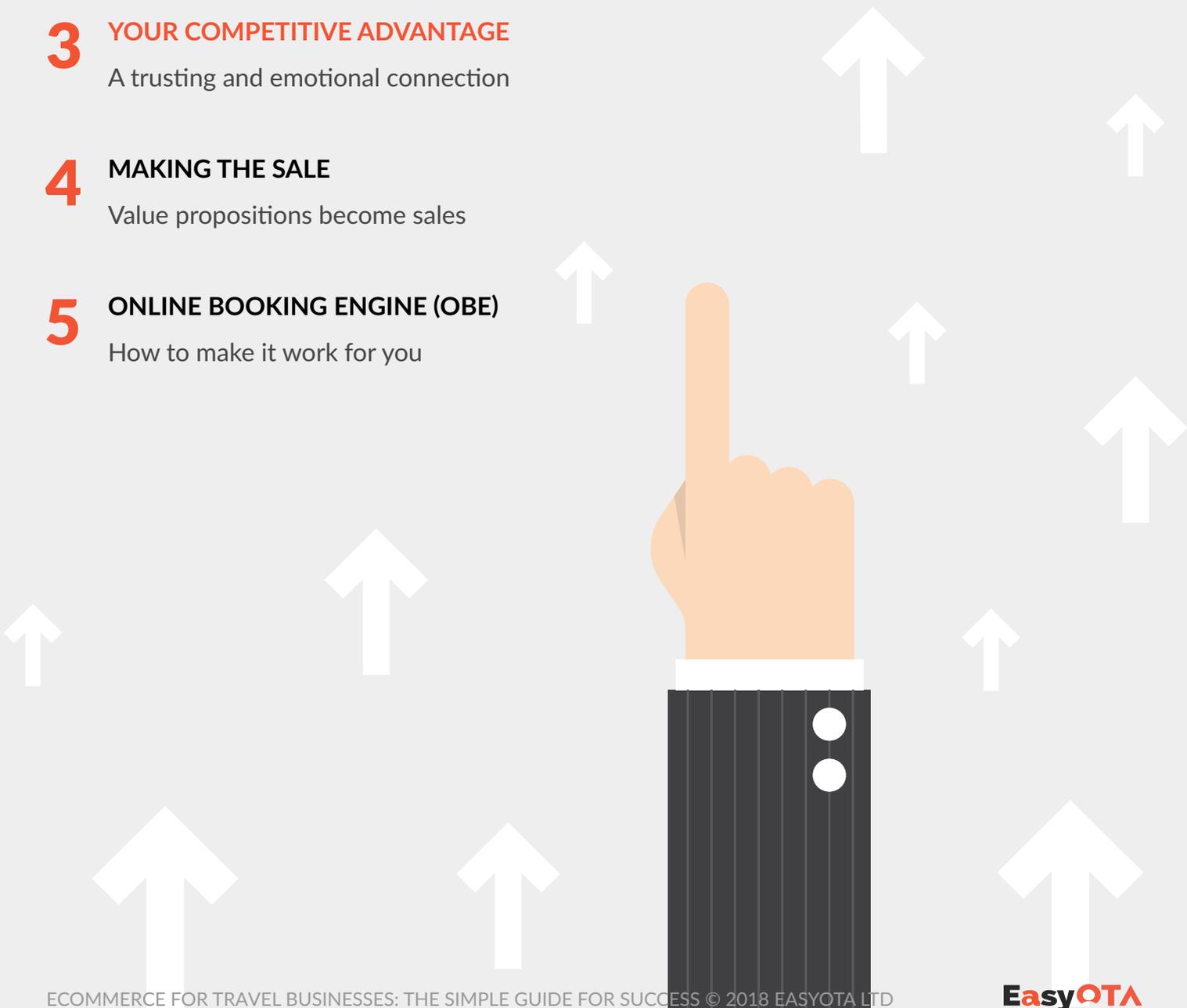
CREATING AN EMOTIONAL & TRUST CONNECTION WITH THE USER

Building a relationship with your customer is much like having a relationship in real life. We as humans, seek certain qualities to label a relationship as trusting and loyal. These are the same type of qualities you need to express through all the touch points of your business, such as customer contact and website. How do you express loyalty, trust or quality? It's not as complicated as it might seem, it's all about being transparent at the end of the day. When you honestly care about your customers and their needs, this dedication will cultivate a loyal relationship. The customer is sceptical to all offers and promises presented to them online, due to being bombarded daily with sneaky marketing campaigns. Thus by having well-structured content on your website and being honest, you'll easily be able to build an emotional connection with your user.

Let's be honest, it's not possible to control every emotional cue that the customer will have, but there are a couple of things that you can focus on to strengthen the emotional connection

VISCERAL DESIGN

Every person has a basic biological preference and an intuitive reaction to a design. This means that the customer will react and feel a specific way when looking at a design for the first time. We all know first impressions is important, thus making it count in your favour!

BEHAVIORAL DESIGN

Well thought through designs, that support functionality, will not only increase conversions but also eliminate customer frustrations they might have.

REFLECTIVE DESIGN

Based on the customer's cultural background and personal experience, they can perceive the same design differently. This factor can directly influence the customer's perception of the website and also the decision-making process.

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TAKE THE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION TO THE NEXT LEVEL

A well thought through content & UX strategy, as well as excellently executed visual designs can build an emotional connection with the customer, but you cannot settle for only that. The same way human relationships need attention to make it work, you need to keep putting effort in the trust relationship with your customer. So when does the honeymoon phase of a new relationship move to the grounded long-term trust relationship?

Start by making a list of all the touchpoints your target audience can interact with:

Website (static content such as FAQs, visuals, online brochures, etc.)

Brick and mortar store.

Online contact form such as general enquiries, request a quote or call back.

Physical such as packaging, brochure, postage, etc.

Online chat functionality such as an AI-driven chatbot or a chat interface with a human representative.

Communication emails such as newsletters, sign up confirmations, etc.

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, etc.

Customer service through email or telephone.

Depending on the type of small business, you might only have 2 or 3 of the above items on the list above. Either way, take a good look at every touch point your customer will interact with. Ensure that the interaction is consistent across every touch point by focusing on high-quality visuals, honest and quality content, excellent customer service and dedication to the customer's needs.

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TRAVEL IS AN EXPERIENCE THAT STARTS ONLINE

Although the traditional way of selling travel is through paper brochures and a travel agent, a lot of customers prefer to explore their future holiday on their own terms. The thrill of the holiday doesn't necessarily start on the day of arrival at the destination instead, the excitement is initiated by browsing a website or seeing a post on social media. People are saturated with content, they want to interact and experience something before making a decision. Offer the customer different ways to experience the destination beforehand. This will drive them into the decision-making process to book that holiday immediately!

INTERACTIVE MAPS

Static maps are boring, the customer wants to interact with something. Rather offer the customer an interactive map to explore the destination and activities beforehand. Even better, hide some small incentives in the experience. These little hide-and-seek gems will get the customer excited to engage even more.

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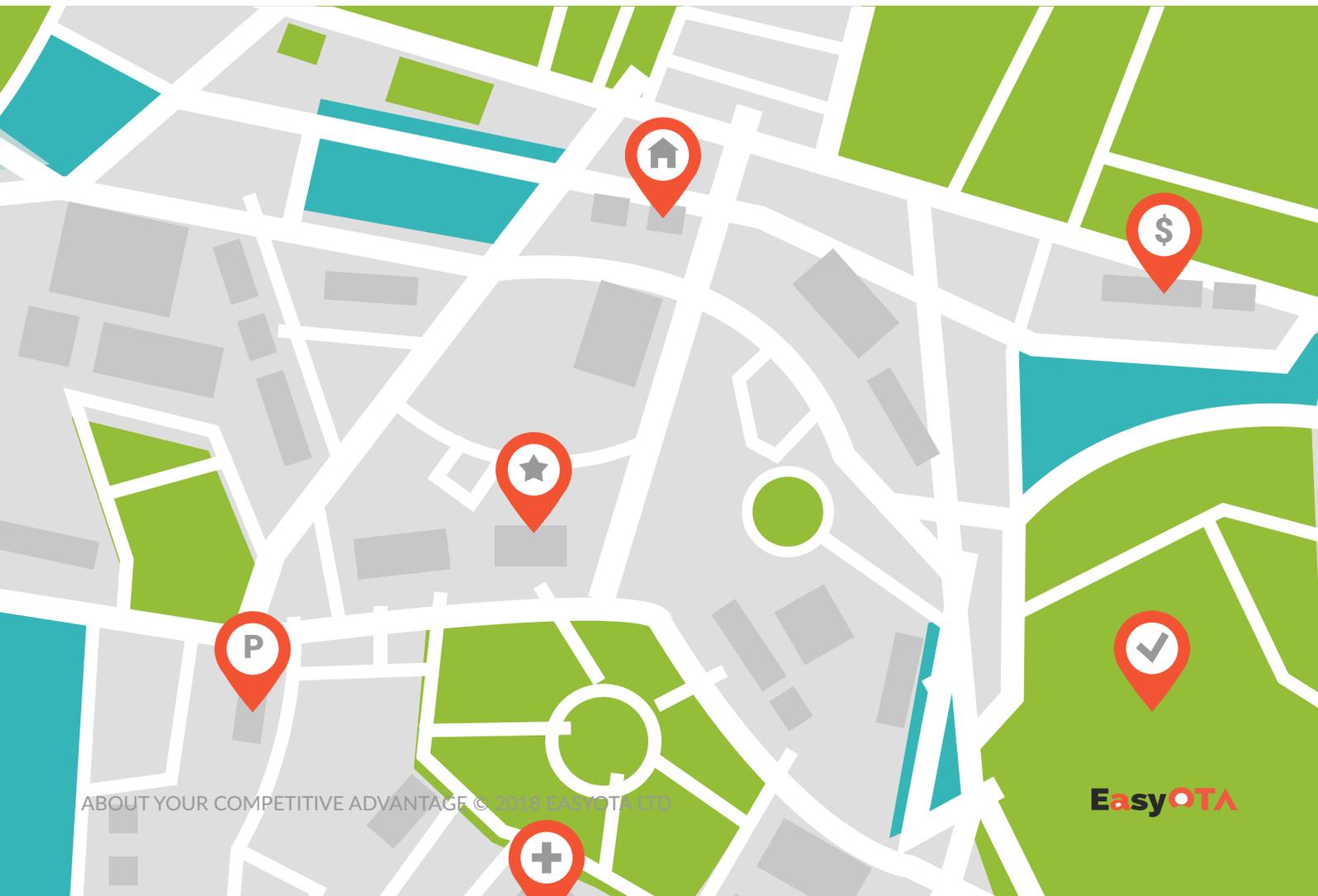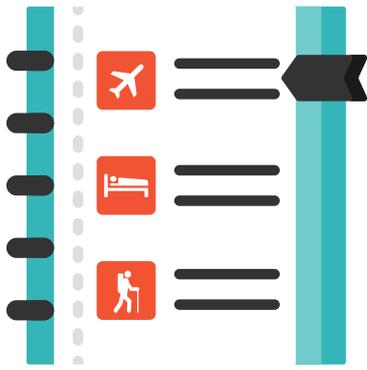
CUSTOMISED ITINERARIES

It's all about tailor-made experiences to make the customer feel special. We as humans have the need to feel special and loved, thus giving the customer the option to customise and build their dream holiday online. It will not just make the user feel special but also in control of their holiday and experience.

UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

Instead of just giving the customer a list of facts and activities about the destination, rather display the content differently to cater to the customer's specific needs.

We've touched on some high-level concepts on how to build an emotional relationship with the customer and how to keep that relationship going, but the devil is in the details. How does this trust relationship turn into conversions?

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EASYOTA SOLUTIONS GROW DIRECT BOOKINGS FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM BUSINESSES IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN MARKETS, ADDRESSING THEIR UNIQUE NEEDS.

http://www.easyota.com

We focus on 3 core disciplines

Specialised booking engines for search, book and pay processes

Competitive advantage

Itinerary building capability – affiliate sales

For an open discussion,

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