

## How Visit Greece used Google+ to make #greekphotos more popular than #greekcrisis

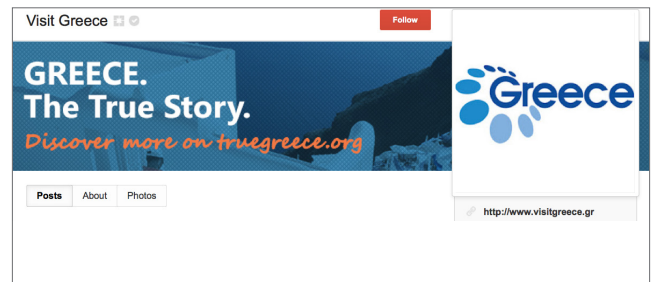


### About Visit Greece

- Brand umbrella of the Greek National Tourism Organization
- Established in 1927
- Headquartered in Athens, Greece

### Background

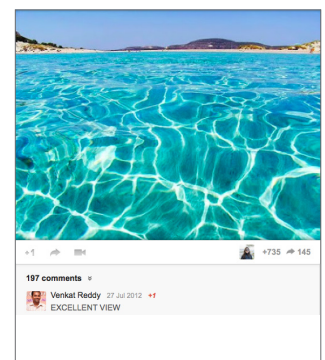
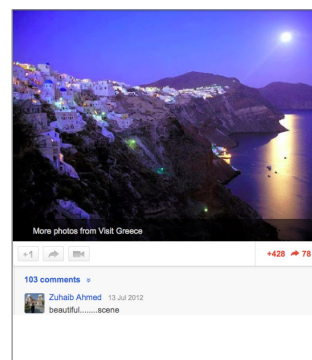
Visit Greece is the brand umbrella of the Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO), a government-run tourist institution with offices in Greece and abroad that aims to organise, develop and promote tourism in Greece. With the goal of increasing the number of tourists to the country, Visit Greece uses social media as a barometer of potential visitors' perceptions of Greece. As an adopter of Google+ since day one, Visit Greece was the first tourism related organisation to set up a Google +page globally. According to Eleni Mitraki from GNTO's Audiovisual Media Department, the decision to launch on the platform was straightforward. "The worldwide reach of Google+ provides a significant pool of potential visitors that need to be addressed marketing-wise," she says.



### Bringing the experience of Greece to life

Visit Greece regularly posts high resolution photos on Google+ as an effective visual way to communicate the diverse joys of the Greece "brand" to followers. **Google+ photos** makes it easy to promote every known or lesser known aspect of Greece through appealing images. "At Google+ we have chosen to focus on the image-oriented features of the platform in order to promote Greece as the ideal tourist destination," explains director of advertising Angela Varela. "The high quality of our posts has attracted hundreds of thousands of Google+ users who share photos depicting the real face of Greece on our page. We are proud to say that through Google+ we've made the hashtag #greekphotos far more popular than #greekcrisis."

Visit Greece quickly realised that for its business, rich media content is vital and has proved itself to be much more important than links or text. Sofia Kapetani, Google+ administrator for Visit Greece, says, "From the beginning we decided to respect our followers by posting beautiful unique photos on Google+. It is essential to act first and engage with your followers. We want them to feel special and important to us." Visit Greece posts every day and is always keen to implement any new form of interaction with its followers.



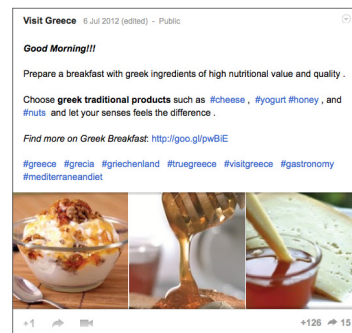
"We are excited to see that the rise in the number of followers every day is in the thousands. Once we even gained 18,000 new followers in one day!"

- **Sofia Kapetani, Google+ Administrator, Visit Greece**

The Google+ activity continues to record impressive metrics:

- More than **750,000 followers**
- Gained **18,000 new followers** in a single day
- Average daily increase in followers between **3,000 and 10,000**
- Most popular post recorded **583 +1's, 145 shares and 169 comments**
- **35% CTR uplift** on AdWords campaign with social extensions
- One of the **most popular Google+ pages internationally** in the travel category

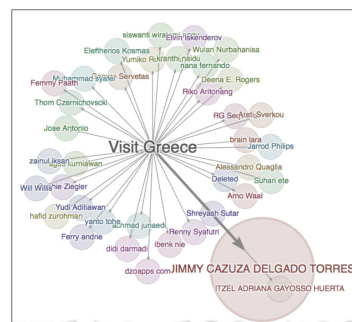
**Circles** made it easy for Visit Greece to tailor content for different groups of followers in order that certain messages can be shared with particular segments. “We place our followers into circles, depending on their interests, +1’s and shares, their personal posts and sometimes their identification details,” Sofia explains. “Then we create posts according to each circle’s characteristics.” For example, you can join the cultural tourism circle if you don’t want to miss out on photos of the most prominent Greek monuments, or join the gastronomy circle to learn more about Greek cuisine and traditional dishes.



## Measuring the engagement benefits and results

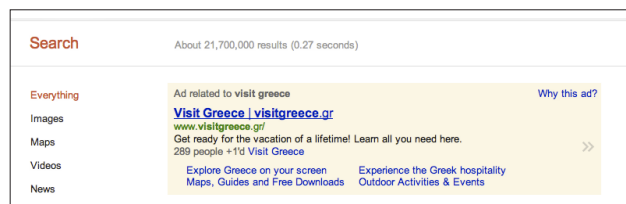
Success in social media for Visit Greece is measured through analysing levels of engagement. “For every single post we make,” Sofia explains, “we measure the success by looking at the times people +1 or share our post and the increase in the number of followers.” This targeted strategy has already begun to deliver outstanding results. Visit Greece has surpassed **750,000 followers** on the platform, more than any other tourism association. And the Visit Greece Google+ page has been selected as a recommended page to follow in the travel industry because of its rich unique content, in turn raising the profile of the association and the brand awareness around Greece.

“We are excited to see that the rise in the number of followers every day is in the thousands,” Sofia says. “The average daily recorded increase varies between **3,000 and 10,000**. Now we see the result of placing great importance on the quality and aesthetic value of the images we post on Google+.” Their most popular post, an album of seaside pictures, is proof of soaring engagement levels. The album has recorded **583 +1's, 145 shares, 169 comments** - and counting. Then, to see how posts like these spread across Google+, Visit Greece is also using **ripples**, a terrific Google+ feature that helps to identify influencers and shows how communities are formed around different content.



## Impact on Search

Another feature Visit Greece uses are **social extensions** across all of their AdWords search campaigns, helping the organisation to obtain more +1’s and traffic to their Google+ page and at the same time increasing the number of followers. “We have achieved a **35% CTR uplift** on our AdWords campaign thanks to implementing social extensions,” Angela affirms. On the top of that, Visit Greece has also installed the **Google+ badge** on its homepage, making it easier than ever for fans to follow the organisation. “Once we even gained **18,000 new followers** in one day!” Sofia reveals.



Enjoying results like these, Eleni reports that Visit Greece is excited to have joined Google+ since the first day Google+ pages were introduced to the public. “The possibility to group all these great features in a medium like this really puts Google+ in the centre of our social media strategy to achieve our mission and our goals,” she says.

## About Google+

Google+ brings the benefits of personal recommendations to Google Search and ads, delivering recommendations when people need them most and making it easy to start conversations with those that care about your brand. Linking your site to your page unifies your +1’s across search, ads, your Google+ page and your homepage. Google+ pages let you share your content with new audiences and connect with them in more engaging ways.

To learn more about Google+ pages, visit [www.google.com/+business](http://www.google.com/+business)

