

Digital Skills Future Ready: Social Media in the Age of AI

1. What's changed and why it matters

AI hasn't replaced social media. It has changed its job.

Today:

- AI tools help travellers decide **where to go**
- Social media helps them decide **who to trust**

Your social channels now act as:

- Proof that you're real
- Proof that you're active
- Proof that the experience matches expectations

Quick reflection

Take a moment to think about your own business and answer honestly:

- Where do you think most people *first hear* about your destination or experience?
 - AI tools (ChatGPT, Google, etc.)
 - Social media
 - Google search
 - Word of mouth
- When someone checks your social media, what do you think they are looking for most?
 - Inspiration
 - Proof you're legitimate
 - What the experience really feels like
 - Pricing or offers

Key takeaway

Social media is no longer just about inspiration.

It's about **validation and trust**.

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2. What works on social media now

Believability beats brilliance

In 2026:

- Phone-shot content feels like a recommendation
- Highly polished content feels like an ad
- People trust what feels real

You don't need to be everywhere. You *do* need to be clear about each platform's role.

Platform role check

Match the platform to its main job for your business:

Platform	Main role for my business
Instagram	<input type="checkbox"/> Trust <input type="checkbox"/> Credibility <input type="checkbox"/> Behind the scenes
Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/> Updates <input type="checkbox"/> Reliability <input type="checkbox"/> Community
TikTok	<input type="checkbox"/> Discovery <input type="checkbox"/> New audiences <input type="checkbox"/> Storytelling

Quality still matters

Authentic does not mean careless. Tick what you already do well:

<input type="checkbox"/> Good lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Clean, natural colours
<input type="checkbox"/> Clear focus and sharpness	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear sound on video
<input type="checkbox"/> High enough resolution (not blurry)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other?

Key takeaway

If it looks like what guests will actually experience, you're on the right track.

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TikTok reality check (hands-on exercise)

This exercise helps you decide **if TikTok is worth your time**, and *what would work if it is*.

Step 1: Open TikTok on your phone (download the app from your app store if needed and you don't need an account on TikTok to do this exercise)

In the search bar, type: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your location• Your experience type Video demo link	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Blue Mountains tours"• "Bushwalking Sydney"• "Hunter Valley accommodation"• "NSW coastal walks"
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Step 2: Filter by performance

Tap **Filters**

Select **Most liked**

You are now looking at what audiences are valuing.

Step 3: Observe, don't judge

Scroll through 5–10 videos and answer:

- What type of content keeps appearing?
 - People talking
 - POV / walkthrough
 - Before and after
 - Scenic moments
 - Behind the scenes
- What feels believable vs promotional?
- Are these businesses similar to mine?

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Step 4: Decision time

Based on what you saw, TikTok for my business feels:

- Worth experimenting with
- Possibly useful later
- Not a priority right now

If you *were* to post on TikTok, what would you post?

Key takeaway

TikTok is a **research tool**, even if you never post.

3. Using AI without breaking trust

Selling vs storytelling. Different contexts, different rules.

Website (selling the dream):

- Light AI enhancement is ok
- Clear, appealing visuals
- Helps people imagine the experience

Social media (storytelling):

- Reality matters more than perfection
- Over-enhanced images break trust
- People expect honesty here

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Set your AI boundaries. Answer for your business:

AI is helpful for:

- Planning content
- Writing first drafts
- Organising ideas
- Improving clarity

AI should not replace:

- Real photos
- Real people
- Real conditions
- Real stories

Red flags to watch for:

- Content feels too perfect
- Images don't match reality
- Videos feel scripted or staged
- You'd feel awkward explaining how it was created

Key takeaway

If a human hesitates, a customer probably will too.

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4. Planning, brand and profile optimisation

Your brand is the anchor

Your best storytelling happens when content supports:

- What you offer
- How you do it
- What your ideal guests value most

Consistency matters more than volume.

[Link to Tourism Marketing Mate CustomGPT](#)



Social profile quick audit

Check your main social profile.

A new visitor should understand your value in **under 10 seconds**.

Tick yes or no:

- My bio clearly explains what we offer
- Our USP is obvious
- Our tone matches our brand
- Our recent posts reflect reality

Instagram-specific actions

- Business **Name** field includes what we do and where we are
- Username is clean and recognisable
- Three pinned posts clearly show our key offers
- Pinned posts are high quality but realistic

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One action to take this week. Write one thing you will update in the next 7 days:

5. Final takeaway

Planning saves time.

AI works best behind the scenes.

Social profiles are often the first credibility check.