

COVID-19 RESPONSE

# DESTINATION MARKETING & MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

✕ RESONANCE



XXX RESONANCE

As place makers, Resonance helps create vibrant, prosperous and sustainable destinations around the world. Our research, strategy, branding, marketing, and design have shaped places from Los Cabos to New York, and from Edinburgh to Bermuda.

We have analyzed markets, envisioned possibilities, and created brands for more than 100 destinations in more than 70 countries.

Our team is international and multi-disciplinary—we are futurists, strategists, planners, analysts, storytellers, and designers. That means we're comfortable combining smart data, future-focused insights, real-time marketing strategy, and tactical business planning with unprecedented knowledge of destination development, branding, and omni-channel marketing.

To learn more, please visit [www.resonanceco.com](http://www.resonanceco.com)

# TOOLKIT

Restarting tourism marketing in a world following the COVID-19 pandemic will require destinations to rethink how to reach visitors in new ways. Attitudes towards travel have changed. Financial considerations are different. Communication and interpersonal contact has been altered.

At Resonance, we believe that travel will rebound in stages. Essential travel will lead to increased local and regional travel, broader domestic travel, international leisure travel, and finally, large events and conventions. Each destination will rebound at different rates depending on geography, infection rates, health policies, and governance.

Regardless of the overarching recovery curve, each destination will go through three distinct phases of marketing and management changes. Each stage offers unique challenges and opportunities that will help destinations, hotels, and resorts in weathering the paths to recovery.

## SECTION

## 1.0

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## PRE-RECOVERY

Even before travel begins to slowly restart, this is the period where preparing, developing strategies, and creating game plans is critical. Destinations should rework target audiences and messaging, clean house with digital assets, and align marketing and management operations for the short- and near-term.

## SECTION

## 2.0

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## EARLY RECOVERY

When confidence builds, restrictions are slowly lifted, and wanderlust starts to creep in. This period is when destinations should be welcoming local and regional visitors and preparing destination marketing and management for a fuller recovery.

## SECTION

## 3.0

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## LATE RECOVERY

As wide-spread treatments or vaccines become available, this period marks a return to more traditional levels of travel and tourism. Destinations will be both defining and embracing the new normal of travel with revised operations and refined marketing and messaging for audiences with new sets of expectations.



SECTION  
1.0

# PRE-RECOVERY

Following a virtual standstill of demand generation marketing at the onset of the pandemic, there are still important elements to execute during this phase. While travel may be limited to essential trips, brand awareness, strategic planning, and marketing to locals still will be required.

1.1

# PRE-RECOVERY MARKETING OPERATIONS

In the months leading up to travel restarting, destinations should take stock of brand and marketing strategies, review performance metrics, and tighten target audience and messaging tactics.



## SPRING CLEANING

This is the time to look at existing assets like websites, social media pages, blogs, whitepapers, press materials, data sheets, and advertising materials and make changes. Run websites through free SEO analysis tools to check for zombie pages and ineffective links and analyze viewer flow and performance through Google Analytics.

Update links, bios, hours of operations, reviews, images, and profiles across public-facing materials. Take stock of printed materials in storerooms that may no longer be useful, take inventory of marketing assets that can be distributed when marketing restarts. While not the flashiest of activities, getting the proverbial house in order will pay dividends later on and can save time and money as marketing restarts.



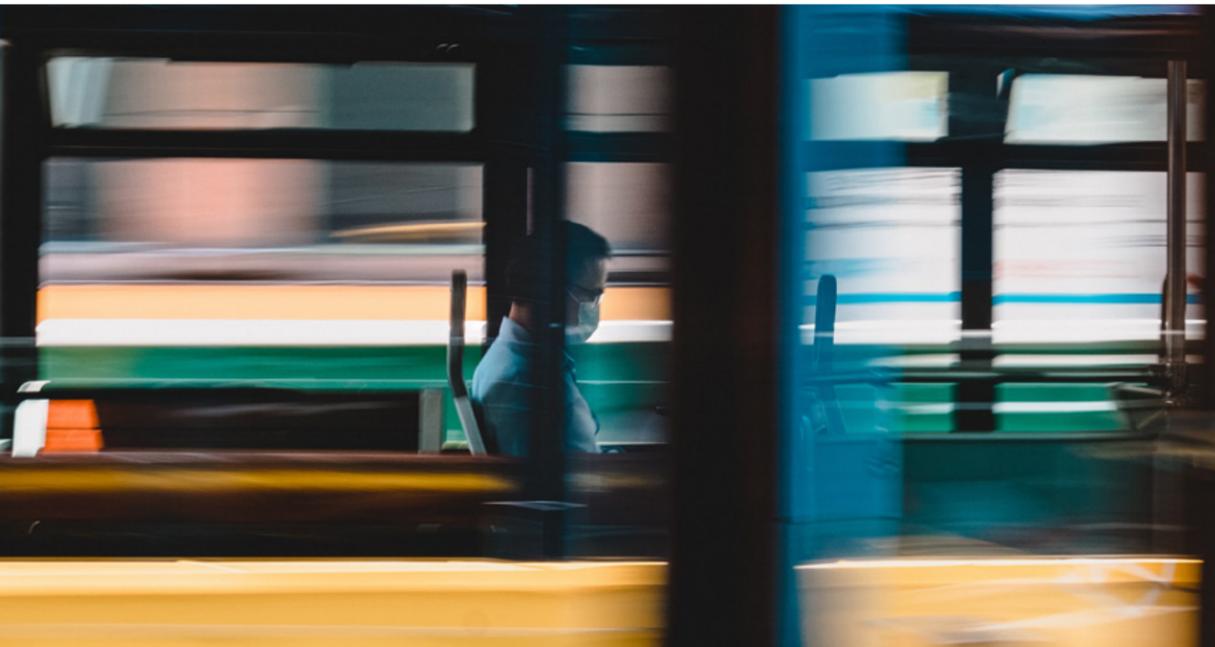
## GET YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER

Before actually putting out any communication, take the time to ensure your house is in order. Use this period of time to check the effectiveness of your website using Google Analytics and one of the many SEO analysis tools.

**SEOBILITY**  
[www.seobility.net](http://www.seobility.net)

**MOZ**  
[moz.com](http://moz.com)

**SEO SITE CHECKUP**  
[seositecheckup.com](http://seositecheckup.com)



## STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

One of the most common mistakes that any marketing team can make is to blast forward with campaigns without considering the overall vision and purpose. Understanding - and articulating - the overall vision, mission, and brand attributes for a destination is critical before successful marketing can happen. Now is the time to revisit strategies and ensure groups are aligned on the overall vision.

Align teams around the brand essence and attributes that each destination uniquely owns. While a pandemic very well may change marketing tactics like target audience, marketing channels, or messaging, it will not change a strategic vision. A solid and clear vision will lay the foundation for all marketing to come.

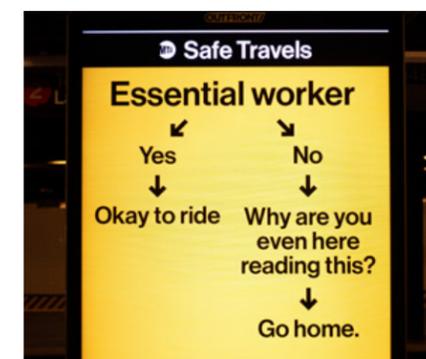
## PREPARE OPTIONS

It's highly unlikely that pre-pandemic marketing plans will still be totally relevant as travel begins again. Audiences will change, patterns of spend will change, some activities will be more desired than in the past. Destinations can't assume that restarting a seasonal marketing campaign that used to work will work again - you need options. After the marketing and brand visions are confirmed, spend time looking at options of target audiences. Destinations who relied on international visitors need to rethink what a local or regional campaign looks like.

Attractions that thrived on large crowds and festivals need to rethink an experience coming out of social distancing and in-home isolation. It's best for marketing teams to rethink multiple target audiences, the associated value propositions for each, and revised reasons to believe (USP's) and messaging for each. Aligning how each destination's unique offering matches the needs and expectations of each potential new audience will increase effectiveness and relevance of the marketing.

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Align teams around the brand essence and attributes that each destination uniquely owns.



## LITTLE THINGS, BIG IMPACT

Simple gestures like wayfinding and public space signage can help reinforce awareness—just make sure to be friendly while being informative!

1.2

## PRE-RECOVERY MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

While almost all marketing will be stopped during this phase of recovery, there are opportunities to still highlight your destination's brand and stay top-of-mind.



### KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON

Destinations should not go completely dark - even when most marketing is turned off. Generally, all outbound marketing campaigns should be paused or canceled. Forgetting to turn off digital marketing, promotional marketing, or incentive campaigns can make your brand feel tone-deaf and could have a negative backlash.

Ensure that websites, social media pages, phone numbers, voicemails, and physical mail is monitored and addressed. Updating sites with current information, updated hours, or policy implications is imperative. For customer service touch-points, ensure that phone calls, messages, emails, and social posts are handled in a timely fashion. While most SEM should be canceled, there may be certain cases (ex: marketing to essential workers or healthcare provider travel) where pared-down search marketing makes sense.



### REMEMBER

Forgetting to turn off planned digital marketing, promotional marketing, or incentive campaigns with no relevance to current conditions can make your brand feel tone-deaf and could have a negative impact.



### BRAND AWARENESS: GATHER STORIES TO TELL

There is no doubt that the pandemic has changed the way we live and communicate and its impacts on social norms, culture, and business will be wide-spread. The positive side of a collective humanitarian crisis comes from the stories and shared experiences that remind us of what being human is all about. Collect stories, images, social posts, videos, and anecdotes from the town and region that showcase how the people worked together to get through.

Restaurants that helped medical workers, small businesses that pivoted and survived. Community organizations that volunteered to help schools. Creating a database of stories to help articulate the gestalt of a destination are excellent ways to convey the brand and the feeling of a place. Highlighting authentic experiences in social media, online, and in infographics are ways to show the community and visitors a slice of what the location is all about.



### PROMOTE LOCAL

As demand generation and outbound marketing are on pause, there is still opportunity for a DMO or regional marketing organization to promote local businesses to residents.

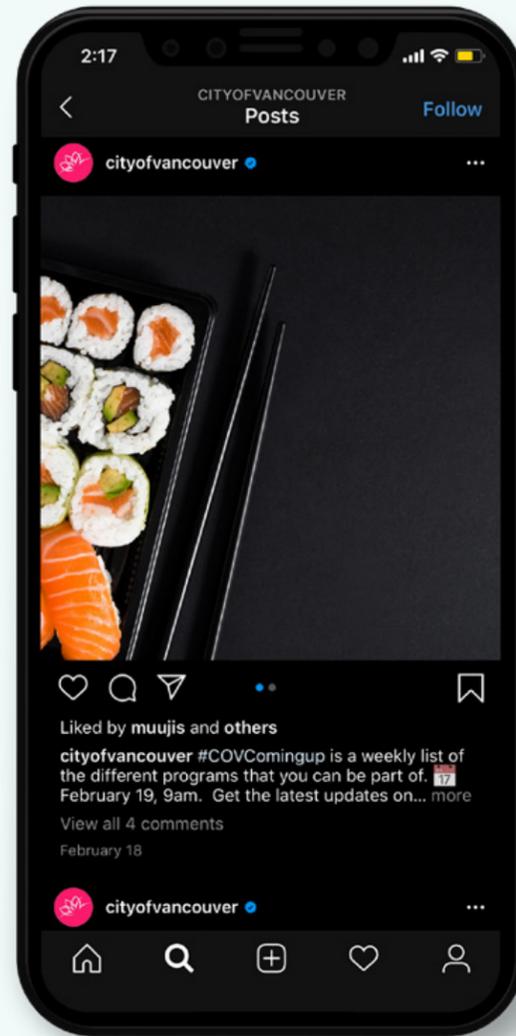
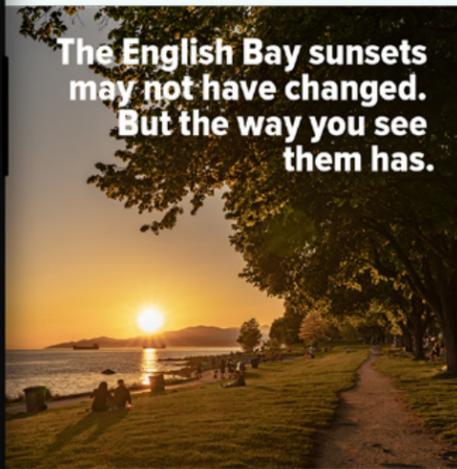
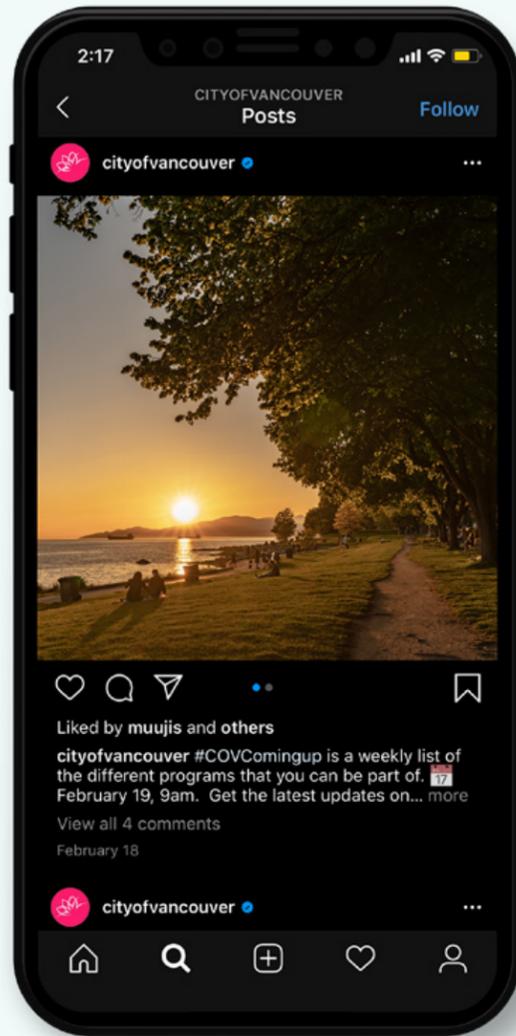
From information on essential stores, restaurant take out, and business openings to information on local governmental and health policies, typical marketing may need to yield to local marketing. Using the web, social, and media relationships from a DMO may become a critical asset to the community and its residents.

“ Highlighting authentic experiences in social media, online, and in infographics are ways to show the community and visitors a slice of what the location is all about. ”



Need an idea? See the next page for thought starters.

**BRAND AWARENESS:  
CAMPAIGN THOUGHT  
STARTERS**



COVID-19 has given us all a greater appreciation for our communities and the cities we live in; your city may not have changed but the way you experience it has. As a way to reinforce this message and encourage people to 'rediscover' their city, we could play with the concept of 'same and different' through all our senses: we now see our city with more color, taste it with more depth, feel the heartbeat of the people, and experience it with more richness. As time passes, we could invite people to rediscover and share their local experiences using unique tags.

Example Hashtags:  
#SameButDifferent  
#TravelLocal

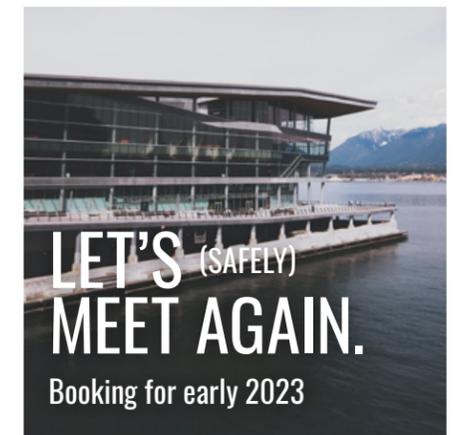


### **SELL THE NEXT FIVE YEARS**

While this period may not be the most appropriate to do broad demand generation, it may be the perfect time to be selling a destination for the years following the anticipated recovery. DMO's have already had success landing business for 2021-2025 based on current books of business and in-process negotiations.

It's generally accepted that travel will have rebounded and normalized (following vaccines, treatments, and reopenings) by late 2021 or early 2022. Working with convention bureaus, meeting planners, and event organizers now to be top-of-mind for consideration for the coming years can help bolster a destination's future business.

Key ingredients in addition to the sales presentation will be how the destination is equipped and prepared to host (hygiene, distancing, safety) and flexibility of terms (cancellation policies, payment schedules). Other considerations will be regional drive markets versus flight requirements, attendee perceptions of city versus suburban destinations, and state or regional policies shaping events and activities.



### **READY FOR THE FUTURE**

Conferences and seminars are in the pipeline; what's required is reassuring communication that these will be safe to attend. Make sure you create suitable messages that feature (in some way or form) the measures in place to make your event safe.

1.3

## PRE-RECOVERY MANAGEMENT

As we look at the pre-recovery phase for destination management, we see an important list of priorities for DMO roles and responsibilities.



### INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS ADVOCACY

As most know, the U.S. Travel Association has led the charge for protecting travel and tourism during this crisis. DMO's need to follow suit and lead the effort locally.

Mayors, city managers, and town council members need to know the important economic impact that travel and tourism delivers to local economies and the large numbers of jobs at stake. DMO's need to protect and defend their local industries and operators. The situation is just too precarious to assume these officials understand.



## COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY

DMO's are getting the word out about restaurants offering meals to go and home delivery. But it's much more than that—it's about helping small business owners and operators survive, and in the process, saving the local industry.

DMO's need to think like small business consultants providing experience, expertise, mentoring, networking, and advice to keep these local businesses running and the lights turned on. Helping with financial considerations, operational realignment, online sales, social media connections, and more, are all part of the DMO role now.

## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE

In the best of times, DMO's build strong relationships with visitors and potential customers from afar. In times like these, DMO's also need productive connections with government officials and community leaders from Mayors to Economic Development officials, philanthropic organizations, and much more. The pressure on the DMO's mission, operations, and budget will only get more intense as the shutdown continues and it takes time to scale back up to business as usual. These relationships are critical to survival. DMO leaders need to make the calls, hold the online meetings, write the emails, and keep those relationships strong, productive, and supportive of their mission.

## DESTINATION COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING

DMO's have been terrific at creating external marketing messages since the dawn of tourism, but now the messaging needs to pivot and include the destination itself. Communicating to a home audience is different, but uses the same skills and resources: the new audience is onsite visitors, local industry partners, and destination residents; the new messaging is about safety and security, the new normal for social distancing, sanitation, health checks, and traffic to start.

## SANITATION & HEALTH SCREENING

It's unfortunate, but the days of worry-free travel are over. Now, every single touch point must be re-thought. How does a virus move from place to place, from person to person? How do we re-engineer facilities and operations to prevent the spread of this and other diseases? Tourism must now join in partnership with health authorities to rebuild the industry, and high-traffic locations like airports, cruise terminals, convention centers, and sports venues are the foundations. And don't forget the individual hotels, restaurants, and shops which may or may not have their own protocols to deploy, share, and learn.

## MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT PLANS

Over the past few years, the industry has begun focusing on destination plans. 'Sustainability' was the buzz word for a very long time, then 'overtourism' made management plans more urgent, and most recently 'stewardship' joined the lexicon.

Now, COVID-19 provides more incentive than ever to think about destination management: how do DMO's manage their destination and deliver excellent experiences for their visitors, deliver return on investment to their industry, and quality of life for their residents, while at the same time protecting their visitors, industry, and residents from harm? This is now a perfect opportunity to undertake scenario planning exercises to consider how the future might unfold and focus energy and resources to implement the preferred scenario.

Winston Churchill famously advised that, "we should never let a good crisis go to waste." The message for destinations is clear—we must not let this crisis pass without preparing for a new future. Take the time, resources, and energy to develop and put in place medium and long-term management plans for your destination, which is of course the kind of work that Resonance enjoys doing.

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# PRE-RECOVERY SUMMARY

## 1.1 PRE-RECOVERY MARKETING OPERATIONS

In the months leading up to travel restarting, destinations should take stock of brand and marketing strategies, review performance metrics, and tighten target audience and messaging tactics.

## 1.2 PRE-RECOVERY MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

While almost all marketing will be stopped during this phase of recovery, there are opportunities to still highlight your destination's brand and stay top-of-mind.

## 1.3 PRE-RECOVERY MANAGEMENT

During the pre-recovery phase of the COVID-19 crisis, DMO's must quickly pivot to a destination leadership role focused on management and operational issues.



SECTION

2.0

# EARLY RECOVERY

After destinations have begun seeing policy changes that allow for more open movement, we'll enter a phase of early recovery. This phase will primarily focus on local and regional travel and tourism and will start to broaden the circle of outreach. This phase should dovetail with the preparations done in the pre-recovery phase and lay a foundation for fuller recovery to come.

2.1

## EARLY RECOVERY MARKETING OPERATIONS

As travel begins to resurface, we can assume that (outside of essential business travel) trips will be shorter, closer to home, and will avoid large crowds. Local/regional destinations, trusted places, and repeat visitors are all themes that destinations should prepare for and welcome.

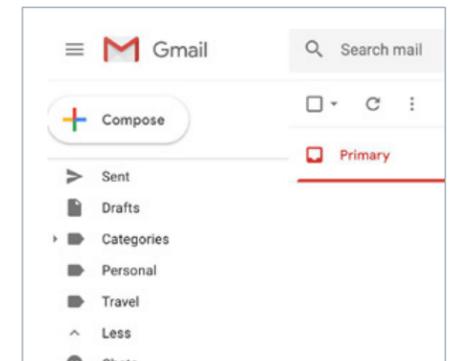


### ASSESS AND RESPOND

As the pre-recovery phase winds down, every destination will emerge with new information and priorities to get business back on track.

What is traveler sentiment? What is the expectation of the traveler versus the reality of the destination's products? What activities are open and ready to accept visitors? Have cancellations been invited back and assured that they are welcome?

Ensure that the early recovery period has time to plan and adjust. Use this step to confirm target audiences, USP's, messaging, marketing vehicles, and revised KPI's.



### REMEMBER

Personalized messages that are friendly, welcoming and reassuring will help in creating a relationship of trust. Make sure email communications are tailored to the audience rather than having a boilerplate approach.



## MARKETING TOOLKITS

Being consistent in messaging, look, and feel is critical for successful marketing. Instead of haphazard campaigns or rushed pieces of collateral, consider a one-stop set of tools for marketing assets.

A PR site including story ideas, images, links, datasheets, and promotions will ease the workload for journalists and ensure a consistent message and look for the destination.

A copy library with pre-made digital assets like Facebook and Instagram templates for bloggers or local businesses will reduce production costs while maintaining a consistent look. A regional hashtag that showcases the unified strength and approach can be used by all businesses and be perpetuated by visitors.

## WORK WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Looking holistically at rebuilding the economics of a destination may uncover opportunities to reach new types of visitors. While FAM tours may be cost-prohibitive or impractical during a rebuild phase, coupling trips with economic development organizations could open new doors.

Working with real estate, property development, or construction companies by aligning opportunity messaging can reduce costs and increase efficiencies. Destinations that create consortiums of cross-industry groups may find an ‘all boats rise’ experience when they couple their budgets, messages, and tactics to reach a maximum number of interested eyeballs.



### HANDY SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGE SIZES

#### 1,200 X 630 PIXELS

##### FACEBOOK SHARED IMAGE

These images appear on your Timeline and will most likely show up on your follower's News Feeds.

#### 440 X 220 PIXELS (2:1 RATIO)

##### TWITTER

##### IN-STREAM PHOTO

These are photos you attach to your tweets. Tip: horizontally center your content so the most important elements of the image are visible.

#### 1080 X 1080 PIXELS

##### INSTAGRAM

Square Photo Size

#### 1080 X 1350 PIXELS

##### INSTAGRAM

Portrait Photo Size

#### 1104 X 736 PIXELS

##### LINKEDIN

##### SHARED IMAGE OR LINK

This size works for LinkedIn posts that share a photo or a link with image to a blog post or article.

2.2

## EARLY RECOVERY MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

As restrictions are lifted and travel resumes, aligning campaigns with the new target audiences and messaging should address the realities of the destination as well as the expectations of the traveler.



### OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The top question travelers will have about any destination is ‘what’s open?’ They will want to know lodging, dining, and activity status and feel comforted that it’s safe, clean, and trusted.

DMO’s and tourism boards should work within their regions to ensure consistent and welcoming messaging is used to ensure travelers that businesses are ready to welcome them back. This should be consistent across websites, social media, and press materials. Consider using a hashtag like #travelstrongLOCATION to signal a collective openness.



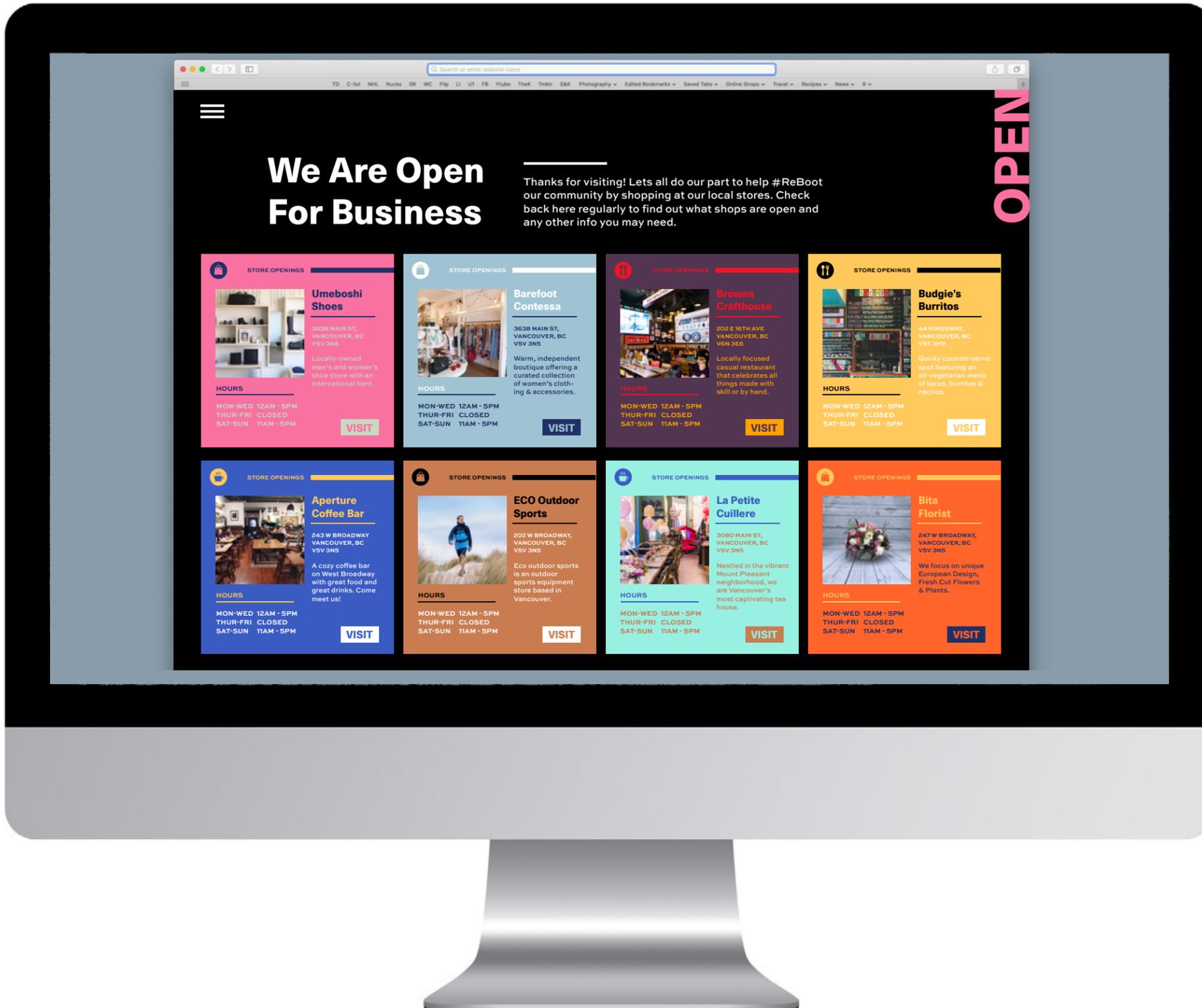
Need an idea? See the next page for thought starters.

### WHEN DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOUR EARLY RECOVERY STARTS?

While this phase will differ for each destination, there are some signals to watch for to know when the early recovery period has begun. Look for the following:

- Government (federal and local) restrictions lifted
- Declarations from state or provincial authorities
- Increases in organic web traffic (generally a sustained 10%-20% increase)
- Increases in keyword searches (generally a sustained 20%+)
- Increases in website traffic (unique visitors, duration, page views)
- Increases in social media engagement (likes, re-posts, comments)

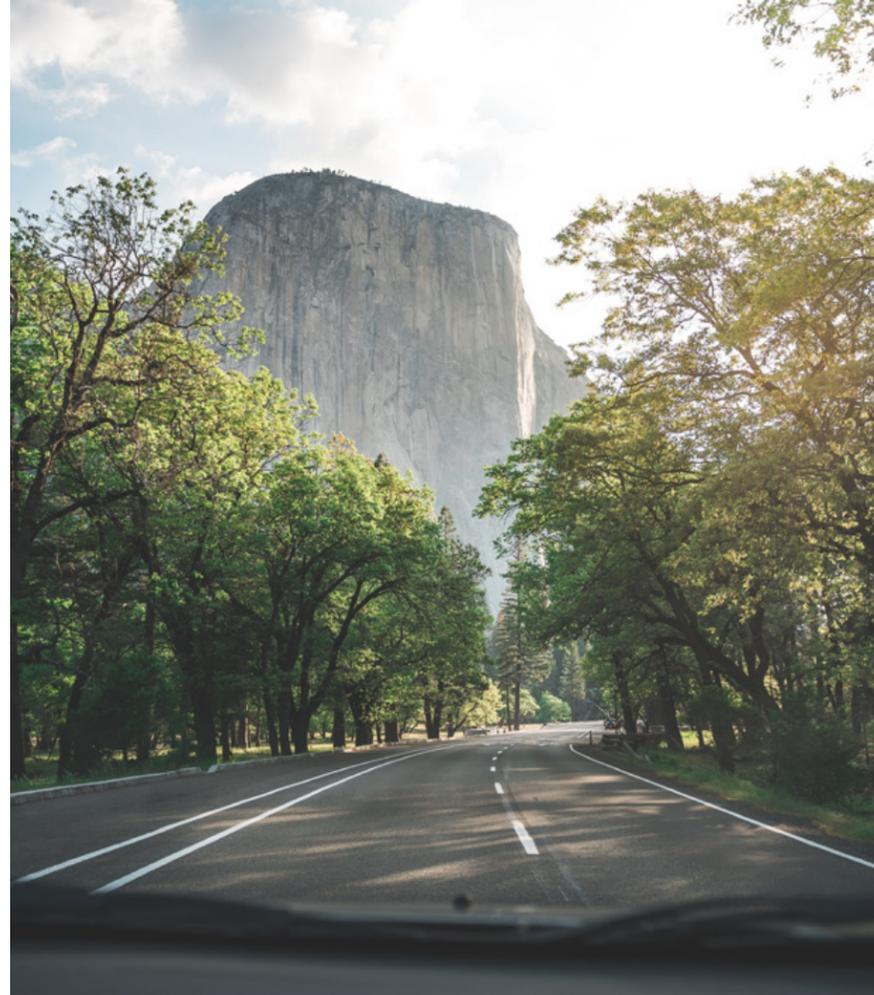
**OPEN FOR BUSINESS, CAMPAIGN THOUGHT-STARTER**



Creating a single hub that profiles businesses in your area with information on who is open and when will inform both locals and visitors what services and stores are up and running. It can encourage people to shop local while highlighting local businesses to visitors from outside the region.

It can also act as a news source for new information on policies and procedures that are relevant to customers and visitors.

Rather than just creating a long list of these businesses, which can become visually monotonous, design a hub that looks more engaging and fun while delivering the important information in a clear and concise way.



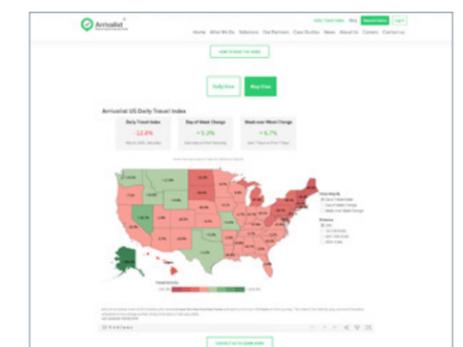
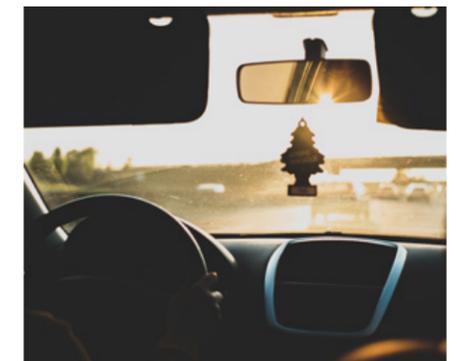
### REACH OUT TO PREVIOUS AND LOYAL GUESTS

Now is the time to reach out to previous and loyal visitors who are fans and familiar with a destination - most likely within driving distance. Use CRM and contact databases to send personalized emails welcoming them back. Focus should be on safety, accessibility, and being a familiar and trusted venue for them to come back and explore. Using resources like the Arrivalist Daily Travel Index which monitors state-by-state road trips is a good way to gauge in-state travel. Providing sample short-stay itineraries or small incentives can help increase their willingness to come back.

### CALL ON CANCELLATIONS

For travelers who canceled trips due to the pandemic, invite them back and reassure them that the destination is safe and open for business. While some rebooking incentives like lower prices or waived change fees may be used, avoid deep discounting which can damage the brand perception of a location. Direct communication via email to previous canceled visitors can be augmented with SEM keywords, metasearch terms around cancellations, and social media campaigns.

Creating itineraries around road trips is a great strategy during this phase.



Check it out:  
<https://www.arrivalist.com/daily-travel-index/>

**INCENTIVIZE - DON'T CANNIBALIZE**

A common reaction to get business to come back is to drop prices and run massive sales. While this may help spike some initial visits, it's not a sustainable strategy and should be avoided. It's very difficult to raise prices once the perceived value of a location is too low and this has a knock on effect to all tourism sectors that only hurts business over time. Incentives are a more effective way to get people to consider a location's offerings. Hotel and restaurant packages, personalized tours with a behind-the-scenes approach, limited capacity venues with intimate concerts are all examples of incentives that safety-concerned travelers may resonate with as travel restarts.

**TARGET AD SPENDING**

There is no reason to create large-scale advertising or promotion campaigns at this time. If the target audiences are primarily regional, hyper-targeting advertising and social media campaigns make sense. Use this opportunity to test online advertising by audience, location, and message. Test drive several A/B campaigns via Facebook or Instagram to audiences within 200 miles. Measure performance of different messages or offers and make adjustments as necessary. This is an excellent, inexpensive testing ground to see the effectiveness of marketing collateral by audience that can inform future campaigns as travel demand increases. Use this as an opportunity to hone messages and study ROI which will increase future campaign effectiveness.

**DO THIS**

Incentivize travelers to consider your destination. Packages, tours and one-of-a-kind experiences are some examples.

Now is the time to test online advertising campaigns. Measure performance and adjust as appropriate.

**NOT THIS**

Do not automatically drop prices and discount your product. This will lower your brand value and hurts business over time.



## LOCAL MERCHANDISE

A locally-made and branded memento is a top request for travelers. Approximately 85% of travelers seek local goods during travel and roughly 80% prefer to shop in local boutiques. Creating branded materials that showcase unique elements of a destination may be a good way to help fuel local sales (and pride) as well as promote a destination as visitors return home. Think beyond t-shirts and snow globes - promoting unique and experiential products that speak to a location's character will be desired. Forging partnerships with local producers, shop keepers, and distributors can help reinvigorate small business sales while developing new and meaningful mementos for visitors.



## LOCAL MERCHANDISE: THOUGHT-STARTER



## “HERE FOR GOOD”

This idea revolves around small businesses coming together to create a curated branded box of locally made goods.

Local business associations could support the program letting the business owners know that they are “here for good” just like they are for the community.

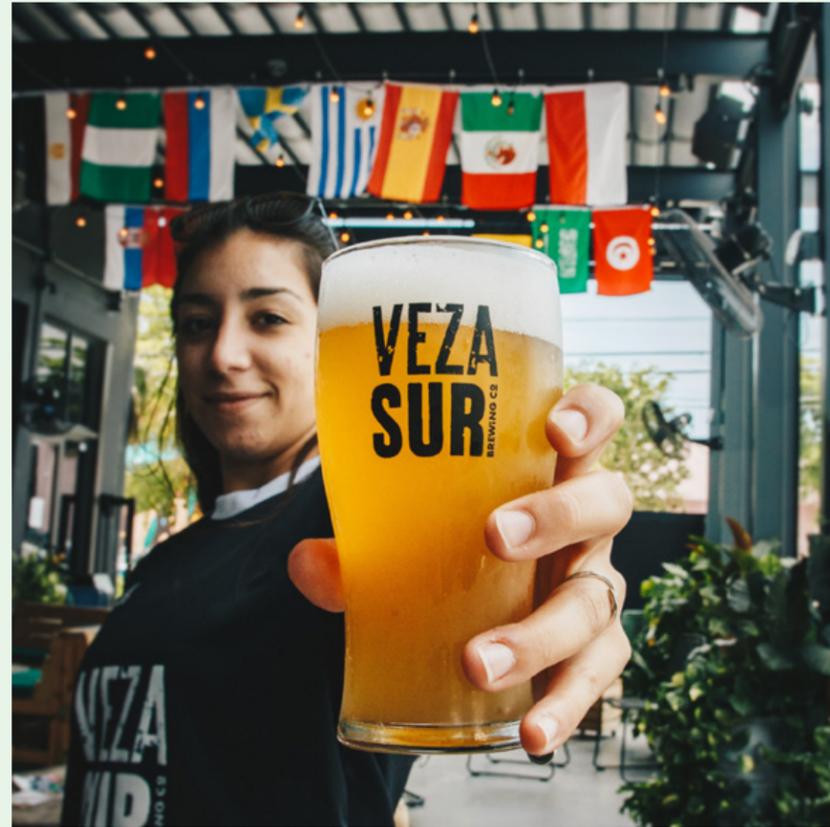
The Good Box can be sold at local businesses and could contain locally made products like a craft beer, a leather wallet, bars of soap, etc. Each neighborhood could have custom designed graphics unique to their personality.

## THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Influencers in social media are huge drivers of awareness and authenticity for any destination. Creating an influencer program for bloggers, Instagrammers, travel reviewers, and proud locals is a smart way to increase a destination's voice. At the most basic, programs could simply be a shared hashtag. More advanced programs will provide sample messaging, images, content ideas, co-promotion, and even paid incentives for the influencer community. Getting others to share the spirit and excitement for a location can be an authentic and cost-effective tactic for drumming up awareness.



## IDEAS FOR THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE



## ADOPT A BUSINESS (Influencer Edition)

Much like other adoption programs, the idea here is to have social influencers pledge support for the business of their choice in your city.

Instead of just pledging money, supporters pledge their time, social media channels, and word of mouth to help their favorite businesses get back on their feet.

### HOW IT WORKS

Main Street Brewing signs up for the program. The influencer could click on their link and see what type of support that they need. On social media, they could share a new beer in the works, download their logo and use it as their social icons, share news of opening hours or recent developments. Perhaps there is a #SaturdaySupport day where they could promote their adopted businesses. Could they go help them move some equipment one day or deliver a keg or give a review of a product while documenting the experience? And of course they also let people know of the program and how others can get involved.



### **COLLABORATED PROMOTION**

Helping businesses work together can provide partnerships that are cost-effective and drive interest from visitors. Offering lodging and restaurant packages, hotel spa credits, local yoga classes, chef's table dining, and a winery tour - cross-industry promotions can help reduce advertising costs for small businesses and provide increased value for the visitor. Instead of blanket discounting, finding value-add offers that are exciting and meet the need of the target market are excellent social media promotions and fodder for influencers.



### **REMOVE THE GUESSWORK**

Create weekend, weekday, and multi-week sample itineraries for inspiration and planning. Helping potential visitors understand what is on offer and how to best create a trip in a set amount of time can reduce planning anxiety and promote less-known activities. Advertise the itineraries online, in social media, with influencers, and pitch to journalists writing longer-lead stories and travel round ups.

“  
...cross-industry promotions can help reduce advertising costs for small businesses and provide increased value for the visitor.”

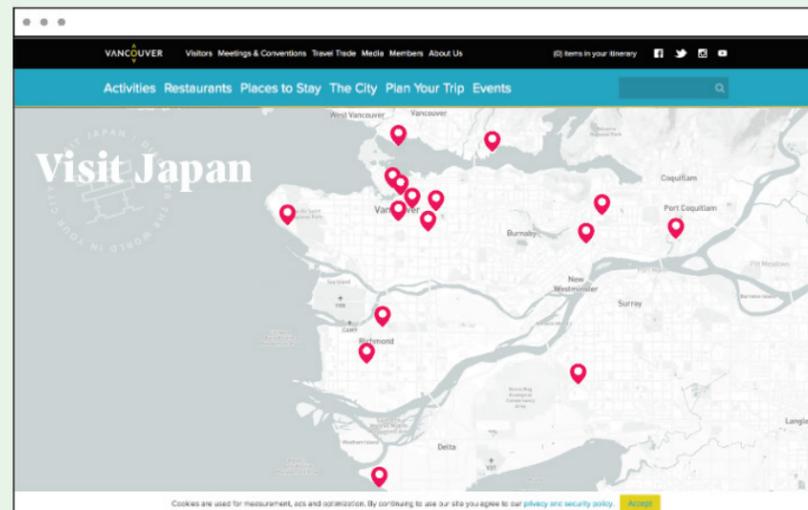
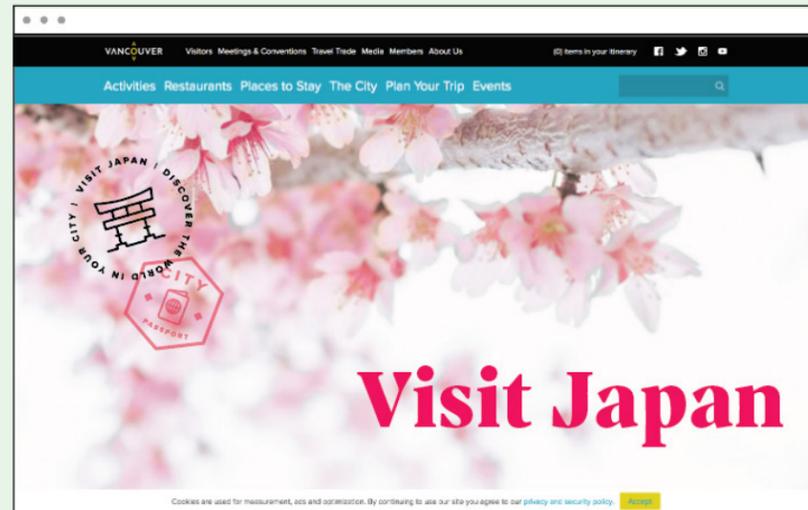
## THEMATIC CAMPAIGNS

There is little argument that pent-up desire to travel will drive early recovery trips. While international travel may be limited during this time, destinations will likely see an influx of regional visitors with money to spend. Consider campaigns that entice visitors with ‘the next best thing’ approach to international locations. Can’t go to Germany for Oktoberfest? Take a brewmaster-guided tour of downtown and get exclusive access to the region’s award-winning lagers. Can’t get to Paris to propose on the banks of the Seine? Build a customized weekend proposal trip featuring a French bistro dinner, a bottle of local bubbly, and a carriage ride along the banks of the river. Playing into the visitor’s wanderlust and combining multiple product offerings can go a long way in satiating the traveler and helping multiple local businesses.

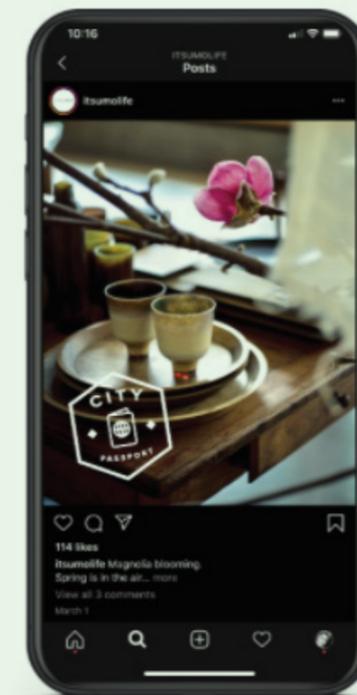
Additional campaigns could include healthcare worker appreciation programs to thank the first responders and their families. Regional staycations will resonate with travelers and mid-week slow periods may be more attractive to apprehensive visitors. Special thank yous for loyalty program members (better rates, exclusive dining experiences) can help re-welcome frequent travelers. Playing into travel trends of solo and isolationist travel could mean a new-found appreciation for car camping, local hiking trails, and telling stories around the campfire. Providing alternative itineraries that map to the post-pandemic mindset of the traveler will be well-received and differentiated.



## TRAVEL CAMPAIGN: THOUGHT-STARTER



Example of a Visit Japan version of the Discover The World idea within a certain city or neighborhood.



## DISCOVER THE WORLD IN YOUR CITY

Many people have had to cancel their travel plans in 2020 because of COVID-19. When things start to settle down a bit, how do you keep them from rebooking that same vacation they had planned? Can you provide local experiences similar to what they would have experienced on their vacation? This campaign thought-starter helps DMO’s curate a list of experiences within their region and promote “Discovering the world within your city.”

#DiscoverTheWorld  
#DiscoverYourCity  
#TravelYourCity



### **TRAVEL GIFT CARDS**

For travelers who are anxious to get back out there but still apprehensive, consider promoting travel gift cards for a destination. More than just a stored-value cash card, create programs that offer incentives of hotel, restaurant, attraction, and transportation benefits. Buy a travel card today and spend on discounted or exclusive experiences when you are ready to travel. Limiting the quantities and experiences will help drive urgency and reassure visitors that experiences will not be crowded.

### **LAUNCH NEW COLLATERAL**

As destinations learn how reemerging audiences feel and react to places, now is the time to launch updates to brand identities and marketing collateral. Does the post-pandemic experience highlight an emerging brand feeling of a city or region? Do the films and images used to showcase a place lack authenticity or oomph that they once had? It's normal for a location to see the need to refine or define a brand and subsequent marketing materials coming out of major changes. Now is the time to invest in the creation of new materials and brand identities so that locations are ready when tourism returns at full tilt.

“

Now is the time to invest in the creation of new materials and brand identities.



### **TARGET THE NEXT RING OF VISITORS**

As the audience broadens, use CRM tools like newsletters and emails to send specific messages to previous and potential visitors. Adapt online and social advertising to increase the geographic footprint and test messages per audience. Broaden search advertising, update SEM triggers based on current queries, and test campaign effectiveness with geographic and demographic variables.



### **LONG-LEAD PITCHES AND PRESS**

Every place has a story to tell. From historical sites to entrepreneurial breakthroughs, there are compelling stories hiding everywhere. As the travel industry reawakens, working with travel beat reporters, long-lead publications, industry event coordinators, speaking events, and online news aggregators are effective ways to tell unique stories to large audiences. With every city, country, and attraction competing for consumer travel spend coming out of the pandemic, having a strategy that blankets short-, medium-, and long-term placements will be critical to drive awareness and consideration throughout the marketing funnel. Aligning the immediate campaigns while pitching for future stories and coverage now will be critical.

“  
Adapt online and social advertising to increase the geographic footprint and test messages per audience.”

2.3

## EARLY RECOVERY MANAGEMENT

As we look at early recovery for destination management, the list of priorities is all about operations.



### **DESTINATION ASSURANCE AND INSURANCE**

The airlines, resorts, and hotels have changed their policies to foster booking confidence. Cancellation fees are being waved, rebooking fees are being eliminated. Now, destinations need to join the club. How can your destination create assurance or insurance to guarantee a healthy visitor experience. What happens if local cases spike while a visitor is in town? What healthcare services are available to visitors? How does a visitor get home if they become ill? Visitors have a thousand questions, and want to know what the destination will be doing to deliver a healthy visit. Destinations need to be ready with answers.

## HEALTH CERTIFICATION AND TRACKING

Google and Apple are joining forces to track infection and exposure. Others will be doing the same. How will destinations, especially tourism intensive destinations, certify their inbound visitors, certify their industry employees, and protect their industry from another shutdown? What organization will be responsible for checking temperatures on arrival? Who's going to pay for the equipment and staffing? How is the process going to work? And what happens when a visitor arrives who is ill? Destinations must be prepared to address visitor and industry employee health. It's part of the new normal.

## DMO MISSION AND FUNDING

Over the past few years, DMO's have started to increase their focus on destination management, but progress has been slow and more reactive than proactive. Looking back, overtourism was a good problem to have. Too much business and not enough supply. Now, there is no choice. There is massive supply and zero business. COVID-19 requires new thinking, new operations, and new efforts. Survival of the industry tends to focus the DMO mission real fast.

The same is true for DMO funding. There was always a concern that during a recession, DMO funding would normally decrease when it's needed the most, because in most cases it relies too heavily on recent business to fund its future business. Now that model isn't just broken, it's completely shattered. And with it, the funding models need to change. The new funding model needs diversification and continuity. It's always needed this, but never before was it so critical.

## DMO ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

DMO marketing is fundamental to a destination. Yes, even now it's still about keeping the brand top-of-mind, but until the crisis is over and travel booking resumes, the marketing resources, time, and effort need to scale back significantly. With that said, it's still sales, sales, and more sales. Meetings, conventions, and group business is still booking for next year, 2022 and the year after. While marketing might be quiet, sales is still loud and clear. There will be new contract clauses and caveats, but deals can still be signed.

The same is true for long-term planning. While short-term marketing is on hold, long-term planning is still critical. Your competition isn't going to give up or give you a pass for next year, your destination must be prepared to roll out your new campaign, your new message and new media. Of course there will be a million unknowns on timing, but every destination is in the same boat. We all need to be ready.

## REBUILDING THE DESTINATION EXPERIENCE

Some restaurants are open for take out. Most retail shops are closed. If they're lucky they have some online orders to keep the business open. On the other hand, most culture, arts, entertainment, and sports are closed for the rest of the year. That leaves hiking, biking, outdoor activities, and not much else for 2020.

Assuming we can slowly open for business, it's going to take a lot of effort to rebuild the activities and experiences that we've lost. That includes rescuing lost businesses, salvaging those that are nearly gone and nurturing those that have been closed for weeks and months. This effort is not usually in the DMO portfolio, but if we're to rebuild our destination experience, it needs to be.

“We've gone from overtourism—too much business and not enough supply—to massive supply and zero business. COVID-19 requires new thinking, new operations, new efforts.”

# EARLY RECOVERY SUMMARY

2.1

## EARLY RECOVERY MARKETING OPERATIONS

As travel begins to resurface, we can assume that (outside of essential business travel) trips will be shorter, closer to home, and will avoid large crowds. Local/regional destinations, trusted places, and repeat visitors are all themes that destinations should prepare for and welcome.

2.2

## EARLY RECOVERY MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

As restrictions are lifted and travel resumes, aligning campaigns with the new target audiences and messaging should address the realities of the destination as well as the expectations of the traveler.

2.3

## EARLY RECOVERY MANAGEMENT

The early recovery phase from COVID-19 will require DMO's to focus their resources on helping destination organizations, activities, and experiences restructure their operations for the new normal.



SECTION  
3.0

# LATE RECOVERY

While it may seem a far-distant dream, the industry will recover. We will see increased travel demand, less trepidation to hop on planes and public transport, and the human desire to explore and travel will be as strong as it ever was. This phase of recovery will still take time, but done correctly, will help destinations emerge even stronger.

## LATE RECOVERY MARKETING OPERATIONS

Similar to the previous phase, entering into recovery should include an evaluation of recent learning and successes. We can expect the world to look at travel and tourism in new ways - new airport procedures for travelers, new vaccination requirements, new trends in health and wellness travel, new cultural norms in crowds and groups. All of these factors will impact who travels, what their expectations are, and how destinations will need to respond to break through.



### REASSESS AND RESPOND

Following the early recovery phase, reassess the resurgence of visitors. Which audiences returned? What was the expectation of the traveler versus the reality? Which venues succeeded and which struggled? What messaging worked? Which advertising platform or promotional incentive worked best? Looking at the KPI's and ROI from the previous phase is an important step in deciding what to do next. Build a step into recovery marketing plans to evaluate and adjust. Use this step to confirm target audiences, USP's, messaging, marketing vehicles, and revised KPI's.





## RESET EXPECTATIONS

While we can assume that travel volume will eventually resume to pre-pandemic levels, what we can't predict is how the expectations of the traveler will change. Pre-pandemic we knew that safety was a top travel concern: how does that change or intensify? Health and wellness expeditions were blossoming: how do those evolve? Isolation travel and getting off the grid were niche trends that may boom and require rethinking the hotel, dining, and customer service requirements as we know them. Will older travelers rethink crowded cruises for luxury river boats? Will Millennials embrace virtual experiences over traditional travel? How does the value-conscious traveler reset their expectations of all-inclusives? Does the idea of human interaction in a spa signal a new type of luxury experience? Understanding the impact that macro and micro trends have on the idea of travel will be critical in creating strategies and marketing tactics in the new normal post-pandemic.



The Vessel - a luxury virtual experience that combines mixed reality innovation with advanced therapeutic technology.

The next generation of travelers will have different expectations for their experience. Make sure to prioritize the things they look for over what you've highlighted before.



**STRENGTHS**

Small Shopping  
Brand  
Dining

**WEAKNESSES**

Small Shopping  
Timeshares  
Short-Term Rentals

**OPPORTUNITIES**

Small Venues  
Timeshares  
Attractions

**THREATS**

Hotels  
Airlift  
Healthcare Capacity

 **SWOT ACTIVITY**

Did a previous weakness become an opportunity? Did a traditional strength become a risk? Map the following attributes of your destination in light of post-pandemic travel.

- Brand
- Product
- Infrastructure
- Large venues
- Small venues
- Hotel
- Short-term rentals
- Timeshares
- Cruise
- Airlift
- Target audience awareness
- Operating budget
- Healthcare capacity
- Conventions & meetings
- Large shopping
- Small shopping
- Dining
- Attractions
- Website
- Targeted messaging
- Competitive advantage

**STRATEGIES AND SWOT**

While global wanderlust is real and pent up demand will hopefully equate to impressive travel increases, it's important to note that the world will look different. Major crises have impacts on cultures and money (ex: silver and gold inflation cited as the beginning of capitalism following smallpox of the 15th century), transportation (ex: shoe removal in airport security nearly 20 years after one attempted bombing), developers (ex: ventilation code requirement changes following SARS), and communication (ex: exponential growth in video communications during COVID-19). How these factors combine to define expectations of travel will require destinations to rethink visitation strategies, messaging, value propositions, marketing tactics, and opportunities. Conducting a SWOT analysis, competitive analyses, feasibility studies, and consumer research will be effective tools to understanding this new normal.

## LATE RECOVERY MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

At the point when travel is resuming normalcy in terms of volume and consumer sentiment, understanding how the post-pandemic traveler expects trips to look and feel may result in updating marketing strategies yet again.



### INCREASED DIGITAL

Already on a pre-pandemic upswing, digital marketing tools and new technologies will continue to shape traveler's plans and research on destinations. DMO's that refine targeting of the right attribute to the right audience at the right point in the marketing funnel will emerge as more relevant and desirable. Following a world now more adept in working from home, virtual meetups, remote collaboration, and traveling-in-place, travelers will require enhanced digital experiences before and during trips. Destinations that offer compelling pre-, during-, and post-trip digital experiences to enhance the real-world visit will have an upper hand in gaining mindshare and visitors. This increase in digital experiences doesn't mean more digital ads or SEM - it's a full-tilt, new way of embracing how technology is used before, during, and after a trip.



Not just your standard digital ads—this is about using technology smartly. For instance, while someone is trekking, they could take advantage of geolocation targeting to receive suggestions and special offers. Or perhaps a simple mobile translator to help seamless communication in foreign lands. The idea is to think beyond ads, and take action.



### UNDERSTANDING FUTURE TRAVELERS

Impact from the pandemic will almost certainly change demographics of travelers. In the relatively short-term, that will be based mainly on geography before we see the world start traveling again. But, a larger focus should be on how the pandemic changes attitudes of travelers today and in the future. By 2026, Gen Z will be the largest group of travelers. This represents approximately 80% of the US and a generation that has never been without the Internet, social media, or mobile phones. Digital natives who've come through a pandemic will represent a large percentage of travel and a destination's ability to understand and create compelling products for this audience is crucial. Fusing the expectations of generational visitors with the technology and communication platforms they deem most relevant will be important in being seen as authentic and approachable.



### MARKETING TO POST-PANDEMIC TRENDS

A crisis has a tendency to speed up trends that were already happening as well as create new ones. Understanding this and creating relevant marketing campaigns will be critical. Safety will remain a top traveler criteria, but the definition will morph to include touchable surface cleanliness, crowd control, social distancing, public space hygiene, and lodging sanitation. We will see increased desire for less-crowded experiences that will build on the already growing trend of solo and isolationist travel experiences. Curated, custom, and limited edition experiences will be desired by more than just high-end travelers. The appreciation for 'slow and small' in restaurants, in food, in shopping, and in attractions will increase.

What does travel look like in the next decade? Keep on top of the latest trends and happenings around you—this could help shape the way you approach marketing in a post-pandemic world.

### GENERATION Z AND MILLENNIAL TRAVELERS

- Mobile, connected, social, and expecting authentic experiences define both Millennials and Generation Z travelers.
- Millennials accounted for \$200B in travel spend in 2018. Gen Z accounted for roughly \$150B.
- 90% of Gen Z travelers are inspired by Facebook, Instagram, and SnapChat.
- 87% of Millennials are inspired to travel from Facebook and 50% are inspired by Pinterest or Twitter.
- 75% of Millennials have travel apps installed on mobile phones compared to 47% of older generations.
- Gen Z and Millennial travelers cite "Instagrammability" and social caché as a top reason to choose a destination.
- Sustainable travel, solo travel, and authentic cultural experiences are common must-haves for both generations.

**UNDERSTANDING FUTURE TRAVELERS**

	<b>AVERAGE TRIPS PER YEAR</b>	<b>AVERAGE LENGTH OF TRIPS</b>
<b>GENERATION Z (AGED 18-23)</b>	4.4	6.6 DAYS
<b>MILLENNIAL (24-39)</b>	5.6	6.2 DAYS
<b>GENERATION X (AGED 40-55)</b>	4.0	6.4 DAYS
<b>BABY BOOMERS (AGED 56-74)</b>	3.5	7.8 DAYS

	<b>SEEK “RELAXATION” WHILE TRAVELING</b>	<b>CITE “SUSTAINABILITY” AS TOP CONCERN FOR AIRLINES AND HOTELS</b>
<b>GENERATION Z (AGED 18-23)</b>	36%	48%
<b>MILLENNIAL (24-39)</b>	41%	57%
<b>GENERATION X (AGED 40-55)</b>	50%	55%
<b>BABY BOOMERS (AGED 56-74)</b>	68%	46%

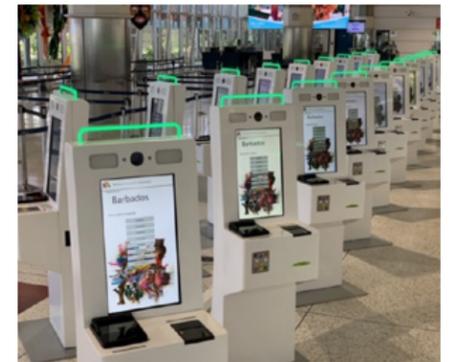
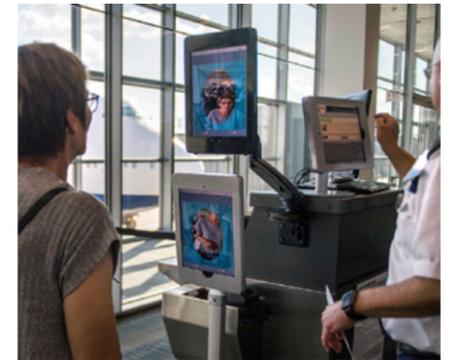
	<b>EXPECT FREE WIFI AT HOTELS</b>	<b>POST “A FEW TIMES” A DAY TO SOCIAL MEDIA WHILE TRAVELING</b>
<b>GENERATION Z (AGED 18-23)</b>	40%	17%
<b>MILLENNIAL (24-39)</b>	40%	26%
<b>GENERATION X (AGED 40-55)</b>	30% (est)	27%
<b>BABY BOOMERS (AGED 56-74)</b>	30%	7%





### **FUTURE OF TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY**

Increases in new technologies will be sped up following the pandemic. Already the backbone of many tools today, artificial intelligence (AI) will play an increasingly important role in travel technology. Routing optimizations, dynamic pricing, learning systems for ad serving, virtual concierge and help platforms, and big data analysis of past trends with up-to-the-second performance data will fuel how destination marketing works. Biometrics in security, hotel check ins, touch-free payment options, and health screenings will increase. Robotic solutions may replace some human interaction and augmented and mixed reality devices will continue to evolve to blend digital conveniences with real-world experiences. Destinations that look at the convergence of technology, trend, and travel will outpace the offerings of competing locales.



### **HUMAN-CENTRIC TECHNOLOGY**

The use of intelligent systems to unobtrusively monitor travelers is set to increase; make sure to follow the trends gaining popularity so you can make informed decisions as to what's right for your destination.

## LATE RECOVERY MANAGEMENT

Destination management priorities for the late recovery period need to take a long-term and wide-lens view of destination strategy, planning, and operations.



### A UNIVERSAL BRAND

For too long there has been a needless separation between the tourism brand, the economic development brand, the investment promotion brand, and the talent attraction brand. Those days are over. Going forward, the new normal requires consolidation, cooperation, and cohesion of brands. All for one and one for all.





### **CONSOLIDATING TOURISM MARKETING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION**

In the same way that brands will consolidate and align, the organizations responsible for these brands will need to consolidate and align. The battles over marketing territory and silos need to end. Destinations must now look to align their organizations and brands, and consolidate both. We no longer have the luxury of funding multiple organizations doing similar activities.

### **CARRYING CAPACITY PLANNING**

Knowing the limits of a destination was always a theoretical exercise for destinations bumping up against overtourism issues. It was a good problem to have, and only a select few needed to know the answer. But now, the carrying capacity of a destination is limited by social distancing. That limit is very different and critical to the health and safety of our visitors, employees and residents, which is now mission number one. Destinations need to know where to draw the line, how many, and how much. What's our capacity, and how do we monitor, track, measure, and enforce limits?

### **TOURISM MASTER PLANNING AND DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

Planning for the future of a destination has never been as important as it is now. First, it's about survival, second it's about recovery and rebuilding, and most important it's about the future. What does your destination look like in the future? How is it different from the competition? What activities and experiences make your destination special. How does your destination enhance the quality of life for residents? What's the plan to make it happen? What resources are needed to deliver on the plan? What's the timing and priority for implementation? All important questions that need to be answered.

### **CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

At Resonance we've created future scenarios for clients to model natural disasters and man-made crises. Never in our wildest imagination did we think a global pandemic would close travel and tourism around the world. With that said, we won't make that mistake again. Preparing for all scenarios is what crisis management should be about. This situation is far from over and there are many hurdles to overcome. It's not too late to create alternative scenarios for COVID-19 and plan for how your destination will travel the road to recovery.

“  
Preparing for all scenarios is what crisis management should be about.”

# LATE RECOVERY SUMMARY

## 3.1 LATE RECOVERY MARKETING OPERATIONS

Similar to the previous phase, entering into recovery should include an evaluation of recent learning and successes. We can expect the world to look at travel and tourism in new ways - new airport procedures for travelers, new vaccination requirements, new trends in health and wellness travel, new cultural norms in crowds and groups. All of these factors will impact who travels, what their expectations are, and how destinations will need to respond to break through.

## 3.2 LATE RECOVERY MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

At the point when travel is resuming normalcy in terms of volume and consumer sentiment, understanding how the post-pandemic traveler expects trips to look and feel may result in updating marketing strategies yet again.

## 3.3 LATE RECOVERY MANAGEMENT

Destination management priorities for the late recovery period need to take a long-term and wide-lens view of destination strategy, planning and, operations.

We hope you'll find the ideas, recommendations, and policies described in this Toolkit helpful in charting your recovery.

Resonance is standing by for any questions you may have about your destination and is ready to help with the implementation of your recovery strategy should you need it.

Take care and connect with us anytime.

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