

# Tactical Guide: Municipal Support for Local Tourism Economies

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Bloomberg  
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COVID-19  
LOCAL  
RESPONSE  
INITIATIVE

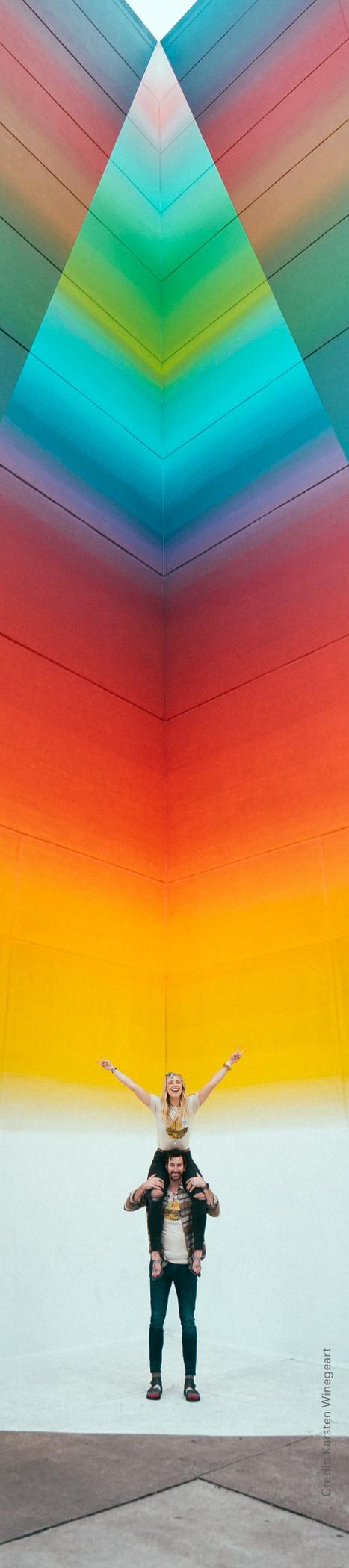
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Credit: Karsten Winegeart

# Introduction

COVID-19 shutdowns, social distancing, travel restrictions and quarantine orders have severely affected many US travel and tourism destinations.

During 2020, US hotel occupancy and revenue rates plunged by double-digits, while the country experienced an overall drop in travel spending of around \$355 billion.<sup>1</sup> The standstill of public life impacted not just tourism, but many industries related to tourism, including food services and the arts.

Large destinations, such as Orlando, Las Vegas and New Orleans, which are heavily reliant on tourism, saw the largest number of job losses, with many of their leisure and hospitality industry workers still (as of 2021 Q1) out of work.

Small cities, on the other hand, such as Tampa and Virginia Beach, which are more conducive to social distancing and often only a road trip away, were sustained by domestic tourism activities.

At the time of writing, the outlook for the tourism industry remains uncertain.

Many travelers now have less disposable income, are concerned that they could lose their jobs and/or are anxious about health and safety risks. This is likely to have an impact on travel decisions in the short to medium term and lead many Americans to focus on cheaper, domestic holidays.

While the COVID-19 vaccine rollout will help to boost domestic tourism numbers by the second half of the year, the healthcare industry is preparing for “an enduring war” on COVID and scientists are warning that “some serious expectation management is now required”.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.statista.com/topics/1987/travel-and-tourism-industry-in-the-us/](https://www.statista.com/topics/1987/travel-and-tourism-industry-in-the-us/)

<sup>2</sup> [www.ft.com/content/17c44c96-39f2-4ada-badd-d65815b0a521](https://www.ft.com/content/17c44c96-39f2-4ada-badd-d65815b0a521)

Reasons for this include questions around if vaccines will be enough to induce sufficient herd immunity, dangerous new variants will continue to emerge in regions with rampant transmission. The industry is planning for a level of testing to continue in the US beyond 2022 and for low- and middle-income countries, perhaps into 2027.<sup>3</sup>

As a result, it is likely that the sector will not see a full recovery this year.

International arrivals are also not expected to recover to pre-crisis levels before 2023.<sup>4</sup> Hotel industry market data company, STR, is predicting that the hospitality industry will not rebound fully until 2023 or 2024.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) does not expect a full recovery in air travel until 2024 at the earliest.<sup>6</sup>

Although municipal governments and their destination marketing organizations (DMOs)<sup>7</sup> have limited levers and resources to support the industry, there are things that they can and should do to take care of their destination, support their travel and hospitality small businesses and workers, and help them to take advantage of new opportunities.

<sup>3</sup> Reporting from the 2021 JPMorgan healthcare conference, [www.ft.com/content/1c7266b1-1fad-458e-8585-12dc3164fdce](https://www.ft.com/content/1c7266b1-1fad-458e-8585-12dc3164fdce)

<sup>4</sup> [www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/rebuilding-tourism-for-the-future-covid-19-policy-responses-and-recovery-bced9859/](https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/rebuilding-tourism-for-the-future-covid-19-policy-responses-and-recovery-bced9859/)

<sup>5</sup> [str.com](https://str.com)

<sup>6</sup> [www.iata.org/en/pressroom/pr/2020-11-24-01/](https://www.iata.org/en/pressroom/pr/2020-11-24-01/)

<sup>7</sup> A DMO is an organization that promotes a location as an attractive travel destination. DMOs can be organized as councils, bureaus, chambers, or offices, amongst other things.



Credit: Mark Daxton

## WHAT THIS GUIDE IS

This tactical guide contains 11 practical actions that cities of all sizes, and their DMOs, can take to:

- Encourage safe visitor spend in the short-term
- Support tourism and hospitality businesses to survive and adapt, and
- Build a more sustainable and resilient tourism economy.

Its focus is on local small businesses, such as shops, bars, restaurants, attractions, accommodation and venues, which make up 80% of the industry.<sup>8</sup> It was created following extensive research and interviews with more than a dozen industry leaders.

All of the recommendations in the guide are subject to an overriding imperative to put safety first.

In particular, destinations and their tourism industries will only be able to build trust and confidence if they are adhering to public health measures which limit the spread of the virus and adopting a coordinated approach, which ensures visitor safety across the end-to-end journey. Action 1 contains advice on how to do this.

## WHAT THIS GUIDE IS NOT

This guide is not intended to be a comprehensive recovery plan or a way to maintain full tourism capacity during the pandemic economic recovery.

This guide is also not intended to help cities forecast, or predict, how their local tourism economy will recover. We have, however, indicated where we have made assumptions about the speed and shape of that recovery, and which are based on widely reported views.

Finally, this guide focuses on leisure tourism, not business tourism. The meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions market is unlikely to bounce back to pre-COVID levels until 2023 or later. (Although, some smaller, local and regional events may return to an in-person format in the second half of 2021.)

In addition to this guide, Bloomberg Associates has published tactical guides to help municipal governments to:

- **Support local businesses and entrepreneurs**, which can also be used for tourism and hospitality businesses.
- **Retrain displaced and unemployed workers**, and help them to re-enter the labor market, which can be used to support tourism and hospitality workers.

<sup>8</sup> [www.ustravel.org](http://www.ustravel.org)

## ASSUMPTIONS

While the guide does not forecast how tourism economies will recover, it makes the following, commonly held, assumptions:

1. The recovery of a destination's visitor economy will be driven initially by residents, and domestic and regional travelers. Medium and long-haul visitors will be slower to return.
2. Some domestic traveler groups will return more rapidly than others. For example, adventure travelers (surfers, backpackers, hikers) and older Americans who have been vaccinated early.
3. During 2021, many travelers will continue to prioritize somewhere "outdoorsy" where they can enjoy wide-open spaces. This will disadvantage large metros against regional cities, which can better meet travelers' needs and wants safely.
4. The current industry buzzword<sup>9</sup> is "slow travel" – the idea that you take fewer but longer holidays, thereby reducing carbon emissions and giving yourself time to properly immerse in a different environment.
5. Another buzzword is "togetherness", which was witnessed after the 2008 financial crisis, where extended families have a new appreciation for connection and take vacations together.
6. When we reach a degree of "normality", there will also be pent up demand for "bucket list" destinations (such as New York City and Orlando), as well as "once-in-a-lifetime" adventures. Many travelers are looking to make up for lost holidays and time in 2020. In a recent poll, 79% said that they were more likely to visit their dream destination once restrictions were lifted.<sup>10</sup>

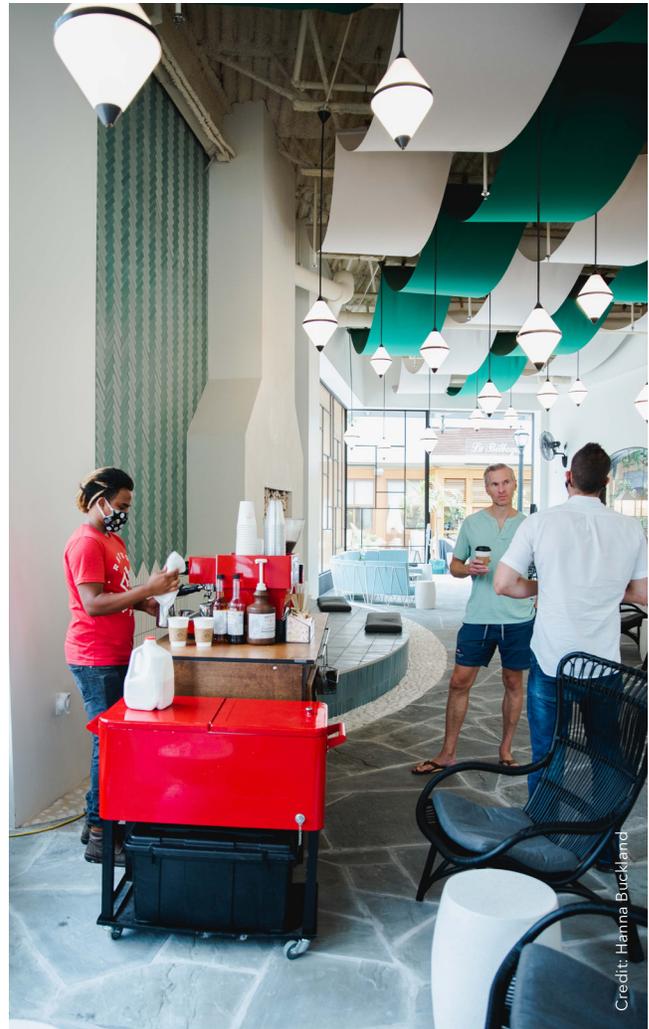
<sup>9</sup> Data seem to confirm this trend, and some travel groups' forward bookings show that longer trip durations (14 days or longer) are outstripping shorter ones.

<sup>10</sup> [wttc.org/Research/To-Recovery-Beyond](http://wttc.org/Research/To-Recovery-Beyond)

## GUIDING POLICY PRIORITIES

The OECD has identified the following key policy priorities for cities to enable their tourism economies to live alongside the virus in the short to medium term, while building stronger, more sustainable and resilient tourism economies as we return to “new normality”:<sup>11</sup>

1. Restore traveller confidence
2. Provide clear information to travellers and businesses, and limit uncertainty to the extent possible
3. Support tourism businesses to adapt and survive
4. Promote domestic tourism and support safe return of international tourism (in due course)
5. Evolve response measures to maintain capacity in the sector and address support gaps to the extent possible
6. Strengthen cooperation within the industry and with other destinations
7. Build a more resilient, sustainable tourism economy (which is green and supports local communities).



Credit: Hanna Buckland

<sup>11</sup> [www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/rebuilding-tourism-for-the-future-covid-19-policy-responses-and-recovery-bced9859/](http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/rebuilding-tourism-for-the-future-covid-19-policy-responses-and-recovery-bced9859/)

# Summary of Recommended Actions

This tactical guide highlights 11 key actions that municipalities/DMOs should consider adopting. All of the actions focus on helping local tourism and hospitality businesses, which are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.



## A. INDUSTRY WIDE ACTIONS

CHALLENGE	ACTION	CASE STUDY
<p>A destination's failure to adopt a coordinated approach is likely to harm its recovery</p>	1. Develop a city-wide recovery plan	Appendix 1 lists key questions which can inform a recovery plan and are based on Bloomberg Associates' recent support for cities
	2. Support tourism and hospitality businesses to speak with one voice	UK <a href="#">One Industry One Voice coalition</a>
<p>Visitors will need to be given confidence that they can visit a destination safely</p>	3. Rebuild traveler confidence by creating a health and safety business toolkit and certification program, providing access to PPE and medical resources, and communicating transparently to travelers	Austin, TX <a href="#">Dine with Confidence</a>
<p>Governments' and DMOs' tax receipts have fallen at a time when they are facing higher demands and may struggle to prioritize destination marketing</p>	4. Prepare to promote your destination with funding sources beyond revenue from hotel bed taxes, for example drawing down American Rescue funds. Find cost savings, such as, brokering collaborations, partnerships or mergers with other DMOs	Topeka, KS <a href="#">Greater Topeka Partnership</a> between Chamber of Commerce, economic development agency, Chamber, BID, and tourism agency
<p>The pandemic is shaking up parts of the tourism economy, and there will be winners and losers in "the new normal"</p>	5. Convene industry leaders, analysts, entrepreneurs, and tech startups to keep ahead of post-pandemic industry trends	Singapore <a href="#">Tourism Accelerator</a>

## B. ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED NOW TO SUPPORT LEISURE TOURISM BUSINESSES

CHALLENGE	ACTION	CASE STUDY
<p>Medium- and long-haul travel will take several years to recover to pre-pandemic levels</p>	<p>6. Develop campaigns which give residents, and local and regional travelers reasons to explore your city's neighborhoods (consistent with COVID-19 safety guidelines)</p>	<p>New York City, NY <a href="#">Tour your own city</a></p>
		<p>New York City, NY resident generated neighborhood <a href="#">video profiles</a> and <a href="#">weekend guides</a></p>
		<p>Toronto, Canada <a href="#">Bag of Toronto</a></p>
		<p>Cleveland, OH <a href="#">Cleveland in a Box</a></p>
<p>Small tourism businesses do not have the resources or know-how to adapt for social distancing, accelerated digital adoption, and changes in tourist preferences</p>	<p>7. Provide funds and resources to help tourism businesses adapt their business operations</p>	<p>Belleville, Ontario <a href="#">Belleville Downtown District Marketplace</a></p>
		<p>8. Provide small businesses with access to technical assistance from professional advisers (e.g., real estate brokers for lease terms, and lawyers for insurance agreements)</p>

## C. ACTIONS TO CREATE A STRONGER LEISURE TOURISM ECONOMY

CHALLENGE	ACTION	CASE STUDY
The pandemic has accelerated digital adoption, and recent advances in data driven marketing have created a more competitive digital marketplace	9. Build data tools which both provide insights into your visitors and boost your online presence	Singapore Tourism <a href="#">Analytics Network</a>
The pandemic has given travelers more time to look for inspiration about their future travel	10. Raise awareness of your offerings with audience segments that are likely to lead the recovery. Give them a reason to travel to your destination (consistent with COVID-19 safety guidelines)	Little Rock, AR neighborhood <a href="#">audio tours</a>
The pandemic has heightened travelers' awareness of environmental and social challenges	11. Create strategies and invest in partnerships that will make your destination more sustainable and inclusive. (For example, embrace multilingual, multicultural marketing to attract new travelers post-Covid – and because it's the right thing to do)	Boston, MA <a href="#">Visit Boston</a> campaign

## PRIORITIZATION

To help readers evaluate each action, we have scored them in three categories: impact, implementation time, and cost. Below are the impact scales:

Impact: **Low**, **Medium**, **High**

Implementation time: **Short** (under 3 months), **Medium** (3–6 months), **Long** (6 months+)

Implementation cost: **\$**: Low (less than \$100K), **\$\$**: Medium (\$100–250K), **\$\$\$**: High (more than \$250K)

### SUMMARY OF ACTION SCORES:

ACTION	IMPACT (L, M, H)	IMPLEMENTATION TIME (S, M, L)	IMPLEMENTATION COST (\$, \$\$, \$\$\$)
1. Develop a city-wide recovery plan	M	S	\$
2. Support businesses to speak with one voice	H	M	\$
3. Rebuild traveler confidence in your destination	H	M	\$\$
4. Consider additional sources of funding and cost savings	H	M	\$
5. Help your industry to be at the front of “the new normal”	M	L	\$\$
6. Encourage local tourism	M	S	\$\$
7. Provide funds and resources for tourism businesses to adapt	H	M	\$\$\$
8. Provide technical assistance to small businesses	L	S	\$
9. Build your data capacity and digital presence	H	M-L	\$\$\$
10. Give those returning to travel a reason to visit	H	M	\$\$\$
11. Meet travelers’ enhanced expectations on sustainability and equity	M	M-L	\$\$-\$\$\$



# A. Industry Wide Actions

## 1. Develop a City-wide Recovery Plan

### ACTION

Take time to develop a city-wide plan to re-open, rebuild, and re-emerge stronger.

### WHY

Many tourism economies have been devastated and will be in turmoil for some time. A city-wide plan can help to build a common understanding and realistic assessment of the challenges and opportunities that your destination faces.

## Case Study: City Tourism Recovery Plans

Cities, such as [New York City](#), [Auckland](#), [New Zealand](#) and [Barcelona, Spain](#), have successfully galvanized their stakeholders behind plans to revitalize their tourism economies. These plans typically prioritize:

- Relief interventions to help businesses – and particularly artisans and cultural institutions – to survive and adapt, such as technical assistance, finance solutions, leasing opportunities and RFPs
- Communications and social media toolkits – to provide clear information to travelers, encourage local businesses to join the campaign, and tell good news stories about the destination
- Brand marketing – to place the city front-of-mind for travelers.

In many cases, the plans identify ways to capture more value from visitors and recognize that local tourism will need to be part of the solution. In some cases, the plans make conscious decisions to move away from mass tourism and reorient towards a more cultural and/or resident friendly tourism model.



### HOW TO ADOPT THIS APPROACH

Given the scale of the crisis, it can be difficult to know where to start. As part of Bloomberg Associates' support for municipal governments, we have found it helpful to think about answers to the questions in Appendix 1.





## 2. Support Businesses to Speak with One Voice

### ACTION

Create a task force of no more than 12 people with specific skills and experience who can speak on behalf of your tourism and hospitality industry, with a particular emphasis on local, small businesses.

### WHY

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of cooperation between governments, destinations, and business.

To rebuild traveler confidence, destinations must be able to demonstrate visitor safety across the end-to-end journey, which requires all players to adopt a coordinated approach.

Moreover, as the tourism sector comprises mainly micro and small businesses, there is a clear role for governments and DMOs to use their convening power to help local businesses work together and be heard by policy makers.

## Case Study: One Industry One Voice

The UK [One Industry One Voice](#) coalition is a weekly taskforce of events industry associations and businesses, led by umbrella trade organisation “The Business Visits and Events Partnership” – which represents the conference, exhibition, and outdoor events sector.

The coalition is supported by eight other industry associations including “UK Live Music Group”, which represents the UK’s live music industry, and events and entertainment technology trade association, “The Professional Lighting and Sound Association.” It is also supported by London’s DMO, London & Partners, which operates the city’s tourism and convention bureaus.

The taskforce was created following an informal meeting organised by an event management company in July 2020 to coordinate the communications being developed to support the industry.

It has 4 objectives:

- Coordination of campaign timings
- Consistency of data and statistics about the industry
- Alignment on asks and communication to government
- Amplification of key messaging and mutual support to promote campaigns activities.

The taskforce took time to build trust and find ways of working, as well as understand and agree on the key issues facing everyone who works in the events industry.

It established working groups on COVID testing and insurance issues, where the focus was on sharing of information and ideas, as well as understanding where conversations were taking place within different government departments.

It also created a website, which contains base line numbers for the industry that were used across all campaigning activity – from the economic value that the industry delivers, to the number of people employed across the event industry ecosystem.

The website also contains a diary function to allow people to share key dates and activations to support the scheduling of communications and messaging.

Further, the taskforce launched a quarterly survey into the state of the industry. This was used for campaigns and shared with associations, so that they could use it in their own lobbying and campaigning activity.

The taskforce’s lobbying campaigns have included [# We Create Experiences](#), [# What About Weddings](#), and [# Save Nightlife](#).

## HOW TO ADOPT THIS APPROACH

Keep the task force agile, focused, and responsive. It should consist only of people with the skills, experience, and connections needed to get the job done.

There should be a regular cadence of meetings with clear tasks beforehand and afterwards.

Focus the task force on specific, practical projects which will produce a particular result.

A government or DMO official should connect the task force to municipal, county, state, and federal decision makers.

The task force should operate transparently, providing regular updates to businesses, sharing trusted information and advice, and creating opportunities for businesses to support its goals.







### 3. Rebuild Traveler Confidence in your Destination

#### ACTION

Implement a widely recognized COVID-19 safety compliance certification program for tourism and hospitality businesses, and communicate it widely.

Provide a flow of easily accessible, digestible, accurate, and timely information and facts about the state of your destination. Be open to answering questions to inform travelers' decision-making.

#### WHY

With visitor number levels down, many destinations cannot afford to alienate travelers, which can now demand more stringent cleaning and safety protocols. Destinations which have implemented recognized health and hygiene protocols will be better able to position themselves as safe, and increase travelers' (particularly baby boomers) confidence.

However, the implementation of a "gold standard" certification program is not, in itself, sufficient. Destinations also need to be transparent in their communications if they are to spur demand. In particular, they need to communicate detailed, trustworthy information about cleanliness and health measures through regular updates from trusted sources.

#### BACKGROUND

Many leading destinations have launched recognizable certification programs to strive for a consistent approach to safety. For example the [Singapore Tourism Board](#), [Visit California](#) and [Cape Town Travel](#).

These programs often draw on the World Travel and Tourism Council's [SafeTravels](#) program, which sets out detailed protocols for hospitality, retail, attractions, meeting venues, and car rental companies, amongst others.

## Case Study: Austin's Dine with Confidence

A volunteer-led coalition of business owners, known as Good Work Austin, created a program called *Dine With Confidence* in response to the state's more lax COVID guidelines, which became a "bill of rights" for diners and restaurant workers.

The goal was to build consumer confidence, keep workers safe, and prevent restaurants from closing.

The coalition set strict protocols around social distancing, sanitary measures, mask mandates, and other measures. It was their hope that the city would endorse the measures.

It then asked local businesses – fine dining restaurants, counter-service spots, coffee shops, and businesses that were only open for take-out – to sign the pledge.

The pledge requires the businesses to:

1. Add notes to websites and reservation sites stating that guests cannot enter if they are exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19
2. Engage a medical professional to counsel employees on safe behaviors, both at work and away from work.
3. Require employees to complete a health declaration to make sure they are not putting community members at risk
4. Take staff temperatures daily and send home anyone with a 99.6°, or higher temperature
5. Require staff who have experienced COVID-19 symptoms to remain at home until they can 1) receive a doctor's note allowing them to return to work; 2) receive a negative result from a COVID-19 PCR test; 3) complete a 10-day self-quarantine
6. Require staff, who were in close contact (within 6 ft for more than 15 mins) with an employee who tests positive for COVID-19, to quarantine for 7 days, and then obtain a negative PCR test
7. Provide all staff with access to health care and paid sick leave
8. Require all dine-in or other unmasked customers to provide their names and complete a [Health Declaration](#)
9. Require all staff to wear masks while in the establishment. Require guests to wear masks, unless specifically excepted for active dining, or receiving other services that require them to be unmasked
10. Enforce hand washing every 30 minutes for all staff
11. Prevent staff from having any intentional physical contact, and make them constantly aware of the necessity of social distancing
12. Dedicate certain employees to service guests and/or divide spaces and redefine roles to further separate employees and guests



Credit: No ma Morison

13. Make menus and similar information items online, display, single-use, or sanitize them after each use

14. Place hand sanitation stations at the entrance and exit of the establishment and outside the restrooms

15. Ensure proper ventilation of indoor spaces by cleaning and changing MERV13 filters monthly. Perform preventive maintenance quarterly for HVAC systems. Identify other measures to increase air flow

16. Adopt all elements of the "Open Texas Minimum Standard Health Protocols" for facility, employees, and guests.

When creating the list, the coalition surveyed businesses to find out what they needed and what challenges they faced. It then purchased PPE in bulk and at lower cost. It also sourced architects, who offered pro-bono advice on safe dining formats.

Where possible, the coalition drew on CDC guidelines. Where this was not available, it drew on local authorities and experts.

The pledge was promoted to businesses and patrons through press and social media.

50 local businesses signed the charter, and numerous towns and cities from Raleigh, NC, to San Diego, and the Hudson Valley, asked for guidance to replicate it.

## HOW TO ADOPT THIS APPROACH

Identify industry representative bodies or leaders, with local influence and reach into businesses which/who can front the program.

Work with CDC and local health officials to develop measures which both meet high standards and will satisfy anxious residents and visitors.

Develop guidance which is specific and unambiguous. Monitor and call out breaches.

Engage a wide range of businesses about the measures to understand their adoption challenges. Work with the businesses to identify solutions.

Communicate the measures widely and encourage residents and visitors to share their experiences.





## 4. Consider Additional Sources of Funding and Cost Savings

### ACTION

Support industry coalitions which are building a case for additional aid for tourism businesses, as well as American Rescue Plan Federal replacement revenues for lost hotel tax revenues. (For example, provide access to data/evidence and connections.)

Support local, small businesses – particularly micro, minority-owned and unbanked businesses – to apply for direct aid and technical assistance.

Encourage industry players to pool funding and resources (for example, to purchase PPE or for marketing activities).

Explore opportunities to make cost cutting savings by partnering, delivering through others, and/or merging operations.

### WHY

In the future, many DMOs will have to manage with smaller budgets, and many local businesses have bled cash during lockdowns. As a result, everyone will need to identify savings, find new ways to collaborate, and pool resources for programming which benefits all.

## BACKGROUND

The pandemic has placed enormous budget pressure on municipal governments, threatening deep and potentially lasting cuts to programming. The U.S. Travel Association and Tourism Economics estimates that the depressed level of travel spending has caused a loss of \$64 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenue since March 1 2020.<sup>15</sup>

Many DMOs and convention centers rely on hotel tax revenues for a large share of their operations. From 2020 to 2025, hotel tax revenues in 25 largest US cities are estimated to fall short of 2019 levels by approximately \$6.1 billion.<sup>16</sup>

As a result, DMOs and municipal governments may need to refinance debt that is repaid by hotel tax revenues if reserves are insufficient to cover existing debt service obligations. They may also need to temporarily close convention centers, delay convention center expansion projects, and/or reduce DMO operations unless American Rescue Plan funds can be used, alternative revenue sources can be found, or hotel tax revenues recover.

Some cities are implementing temporary measures. For example, McCormick Place Convention Center in Chicago has traditionally accessed taxes from restaurant and hotel sales, car rentals and airport departures, as well as the State of Illinois' sales tax. When sales taxes dropped in 2020, the Center tapped into a reserve fund to help pay back its debt. In 2021, it plans to refinance its debt to replenish the fund.<sup>17</sup>

## GUIDANCE

Bloomberg Associates has created a [tactical guide](#) on new sources of operating funding for economic development programming, some of which may be relevant for programming to support your tourism economy.

Cities may also want to look at alternative DMO funding models, which do not rely on hotel or sales tax.

For example, Julie Heart from *CFO by Design* has [suggested](#) a shared-services model between local convention bureaus, Chambers of Commerce and economic development councils.

Under this model, the convention bureau would develop branding and creative services for the city, the Chamber would educate local businesses on the value that tourism and meetings bring to the destination, and the economic development council would work with the convention bureau to attract industry, businesses and talent to the city.

Other cities, such as London (UK) have gone further, merging their agencies to better promote the city with one voice while achieving significant cost savings. In 2011, [London](#) merged its tourism and convention bureau with its business attraction, international student attention, and small business support programs, generating more than £2m initial savings.

A similar model was followed in Topeka, Kansas. The Greater Topeka Partnership combined the economic development agency, Chamber of Commerce, BID and tourism agency, which combined office space and eliminated redundancies (such as multiple contracts with the same vendor). The organizations also coordinated their plans and activities to create jobs and attract visitors.

We are also seeing more partnership working between local and state/national DMOs. For example, Destination Canada and Destination BC announced a [partnership](#) last year to help local DMOs market domestically.

<sup>15</sup> [www.ustravel.org/toolkit/covid-19-travel-industry-research](http://www.ustravel.org/toolkit/covid-19-travel-industry-research)

<sup>16</sup> [www.hvs.com/article/8911-2020-hvs-lodging-tax-report-usa](http://www.hvs.com/article/8911-2020-hvs-lodging-tax-report-usa)

<sup>17</sup> [www.bizjournals.com/washington/news/2020/08/27/convention-centers-use-reserves-to-cover-covid-hit.html](http://www.bizjournals.com/washington/news/2020/08/27/convention-centers-use-reserves-to-cover-covid-hit.html)



## 5. Help Your Industry to be at the Front of “The New Normal”

### ACTION

Convene thought leaders, analysts, entrepreneurs, and tech startups to focus on technology development and adoption that could reshape travel and tourism.

### WHY

The pandemic is turning the travel industry upside down and has changed the way people think about travel. "The next incarnation of tourism is on its way."<sup>18</sup>

### BACKGROUND

Thanks to the Internet, the ways that people travel have changed drastically in a short span of time. Technology has made traveling safer and less time consuming, changed the way we book a flight or room, the way we are informed of events, or seek advice to sightsee a city. It has allowed us to have more personalized experiences, helped us to surpass language barriers, and even changed our packing routines. It is also impacting how destinations and those in the tourism industry market their products and services.

For example, data analytics, cloud computing and devices which are connected to the Internet-of-Things allow personalization for a better customer experience. Smart conversational interfaces have become more useful in providing feedback and answering customer questions. Free mobile connectivity not only allows travelers to share their experiences with others through social media easily, it also allows a destination to collect data about their travelers during different steps of the visit – which can help them sell the right product to the right visitor at the right time.

<sup>18</sup> [www.usatoday.com/story/travel/advice/2020/10/23/how-covid-19-2020-changed-travel-forever-and-what-means-you/3727903001/](https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/advice/2020/10/23/how-covid-19-2020-changed-travel-forever-and-what-means-you/3727903001/)

## Case Study

Some cities are not only focusing on the immediate effects of the pandemic on the travel industry, they are also taking a longer-term perspective.

For example, the Singapore Tourism Board has partnered with Ravel Innovation to create the [Singapore Tourism Accelerator](#).

It targets startups that are developing solutions to future-proof the travel and tourism industry and help tourism companies thrive amidst the challenges brought about by COVID-19.

During the 4 month program, the selected startups develop pilot solutions to [challenges which have been defined by local travel and hospitality businesses](#).

For example, convention and events businesses in Singapore are seeking a solution for the following challenge:

*Current visitor, exhibitor, speaker and competition data collection/analysis is insufficient for customer insights and limits the ability to design personalised, hybrid experiences for the MICE sector.*

*The company will design an online-to-offline (O2O) visitor management solution that can capture exhibitors and visitors' data (e.g., interactions, transactions), analyse and profile visitors to help design better experiences and business matchmaking.*

The chosen startup will gain unparalleled access to the leading industry players, and can also get assistance with temporary relocation to Singapore.

## HOW TO ADOPT THIS APPROACH

Identify an experienced tech accelerator partner and decide the size and cadence of your cohorts. (the Singapore Tourism Accelerator runs two rounds a year, each with up to 12 companies).

Create an application process with clear selection criteria for admission to the accelerator. Promote the program extensively, through government colleagues, tech membership groups, incubators, universities, social media, conferences, and in person.

Design an accelerator program. The Singapore Tourism Accelerator consists of two phases: a 2-week "acceleration" bootcamp, and a 3-month "pilot" phase. The bootcamp comprises modules, workshops, mentoring sessions, and events to help program participants define value propositions and use-cases, in collaborations with matched industry partners. During the pilot phase, participants work with industry partners to build prototypes and assess the feasibility of scaling up their solutions. The prototypes are funded by industry partner grants.

Finally, plan a demo day for participants to showcase their solutions to a wide set of industry partners and investors.





# B. Actions to be Implemented Now to Support Leisure Tourism Businesses

## 6. Encourage Local Tourism

### ACTION

Work with local communities to develop marketing campaigns which will give residents and nearby travelers reasons to explore your destination's "off the beaten track neighborhoods".

### WHY

Travelers' inclinations and behaviors have been transformed because of the fear of getting infected, trapped, or quarantined. As a result, travelers are looking for opportunities to travel to destinations which are closer to home, familiar, predictable and low risk.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> [wttc.org/Research/To-Recovery-Beyond](http://wttc.org/Research/To-Recovery-Beyond)

## BACKGROUND

Travel restrictions to and from countries combined with insecurity regarding crowded airport terminals and flights mean that domestic tourism is likely to recover much more quickly, and local holiday options and weekend staycations are increasing in popularity.<sup>20</sup>

Even before the pandemic, the U.S. domestic tourism market was worth nearly U.S.\$ 1 trillion.

Since 2020, many destinations have focused on growing domestic tourism, including programs to encourage residents to explore their own cities. These include initiatives focused on marketing and promotion, as well as financial incentives.



## EXAMPLES

- As part of its All In NYC campaign, New York City's NYC&Co created weekend neighborhood guides, such as [Exploring Black-Owned Harlem](#), and a [Tour Your Own City](#) program, to encourage residents to explore different parts of the city.
- London created "[Because I'm a Londoner](#)" citywide campaign to inspire a recovery in consumer spending by encouraging residents to responsibly rediscover the capital and support local businesses, organisations, areas and places. It also created the [London Alliance](#), a community of 500+ businesses, which were provided with free assets to use as part of the campaign. The campaign increased consumer confidence by 5% and led to a 43% uplift in frequency of going out.
- Toronto, Canada created a program called [Bag of Toronto](#), which encouraged residents to purchase goods from different city neighborhoods. Cleveland created a similar program, called [Cleveland in a Box](#).
- Visit Houston marketed coupons and deals on its [Houston Experience Marketplace](#) to local residents. The marketplace is delivered in partnership with Bandwango's technology platform, and generates income for the DMO.
- Geneva, Switzerland gave overnight visitors [gift cards](#) preloaded with 100CHF (~\$110) which could be used at a range of hotels, restaurants, cafes, bars and on activities around the city.
- Explore France partnered with cities to create a campaign [#CetÉtéJeVisiteLaFrance](#), to inspire its citizens to explore 21 city-regions across the country.
- Little Rock convention bureau partnered with the local historic association to create a series of [audio guides](#) for walking and driving tours. The tours have been enjoyed by students doing remote learning and will be marketed for visitors to come.

<sup>20</sup> [www.travelpulse.com/news/hotels-and-resorts/staycations-on-the-rise-around-the-world.html](http://www.travelpulse.com/news/hotels-and-resorts/staycations-on-the-rise-around-the-world.html)

## GUIDANCE

Bloomberg Associates has created a “how to” guide to create a neighborhood tourism campaign, which can be found at Appendix 2.

We have also created a “how to” guide to segment your target audience, which can also be found in the Appendix.

We are not, therefore, able to share a case study of emerging good practice by a DMO at this time.



## 7. Provide Access to Funds and Resources for Tourism Businesses to Adapt

### ACTION

Provide access to finance and technical assistance to help small, tourism and hospitality businesses pivot, adapt, and capitalize on new demands and opportunities in a post-pandemic world.

### WHY

Keeping local, small businesses is critical for the recovery of your tourism economy. By helping them develop new online communications and sales channels, create new lines of business, or repurpose and adapt their space, you are helping to create long-term revenue solutions.

### BACKGROUND

In 2020, U.S. travel spend declined by nearly \$500 million and, while the industry improved between April and September, progress stalled in the final quarter of the year due to the continued absence of business travel and another surge in COVID-19 cases.<sup>21</sup>

The travel economies of every city and state were affected. Seventy percent of U.S. metropolitan regions have at least 10% of their workforce in leisure and hospitality, and during 2020, cities in more than 18 states experienced 40+% downturn in travel spending.<sup>22</sup>

The impact was felt most by small businesses (with fewer than 500 employees), which make up 99.5% of the tourism sector and 60.6% of employment within the sector. Many of them face a time of extreme liquidity strain and most of them entered the pandemic with very limited cash flow.<sup>23</sup>

Women and minorities have also been hard hit, with women- and minority-owned businesses comprising 63.5% of U.S. accommodation and food services businesses and 46.5% of arts and entertainment businesses.<sup>24</sup>

Given that COVID-19 will probably be around for a long time, many tourism businesses will need to adapt and/or reinvent themselves for “the new normal.”

<sup>21</sup> [www.ustravel.org/toolkit/covid-19-travel-industry-research](http://www.ustravel.org/toolkit/covid-19-travel-industry-research)

<sup>22</sup> [www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/08/20/back-to-work-in-the-flames-the-hospitality-sector-in-a-pandemic/](http://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/08/20/back-to-work-in-the-flames-the-hospitality-sector-in-a-pandemic/)

<sup>23</sup> [www.jpmmorganchase.com/content/dam/jpmc/jpmorgan-chase-and-co/institute/pdf/jpmc-institute-small-business-report.pdf](http://www.jpmmorganchase.com/content/dam/jpmc/jpmorgan-chase-and-co/institute/pdf/jpmc-institute-small-business-report.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> [www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/08/20/back-to-work-in-the-flames-the-hospitality-sector-in-a-pandemic/](http://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/08/20/back-to-work-in-the-flames-the-hospitality-sector-in-a-pandemic/)

## Case Study: Belleville Downtown District Marketplace

Belleville is a town located between Toronto and Ottawa in Canada. During Canada's strict lockdown in 2020, the Downtown Belleville Improvement Area (a business improvement district) decided to embark on a project to create an online marketplace called the *Downtown District Marketplace*.

In just four weeks, the BID launched a website which allowed nearly two-dozen businesses to receive orders for curbside pickup. Today, the website hosts over a thousand products from local businesses, including restaurants, artisan markets, art associations, and galleries. It has attracted more than 50,000 visitors and over 1,000 orders. In fact, the marketplace has been such a success that the BID is no longer supporting it with grant funding.

The BID is currently developing the site to add shipping. Currently, customers can pick up curbside, or merchants manage deliveries themselves.

### How the marketplace works

The BID created the marketplace on the [Shopify](#) platform. The platform charges the BID \$299/month, plus \$10/month for a multi vendor marketplace app, which means the BID does not become the merchant.

The BID was fortunate to have two young staff members with the technical skills needed to design a website. They created pages for each local business, which only they could access and edit.

Shopify collects the money from the sales, and the BID pays its merchants every 2 weeks. Each local business is responsible for paying credit card and transaction fees. The BID doesn't take any commission.

The local businesses greatest concern about the marketplace was payment terms. Early on in the project, the BID spent many hours sorting out payments to the local businesses, but it has since managed to automate this process.



Credit: Darlene DeVita

### Launching the marketplace

The BID launched the marketplace with a teaser campaign, which included VIP access to the first 250 people that signed up for its newsletter. In this way, it was able to gather feedback on issues that early users faced and make adjustments before opening to the general public.

Its subsequent marketing tactics have included social media (paid and organic), digital advertisements, local radio, and press releases sent to local and national media outlets. Local partners have also provided content and written features for the Marketplace.

The BID did not receive support from the city to launch the Marketplace. It did, however, receive funding from a regional marketing board to run a contest on the website – users who spent \$50 could win Marketplace gift cards to use on their next purchase.

## HOW TO ADOPT THIS APPROACH

The project's success was based on strong relationships with local businesses

1. Assemble and train a group of 5-10 local business owners, who will become your ambassadors to get other merchants on board
2. Regularly engage business owners and provide sufficient training about the sales platform, recognizing that different business owners have different levels of digital literacy. This will mean creating step-by-step guides, complete with screenshots on how to add products and make payments
3. Help merchants to become confident selling online. Just as a shop needs an attractive window display, a website needs beautiful photos. Merchants will also have to do their own marketing to drive traffic from their website to the Marketplace, for example, by posting and buying advertisements on social media.







Credit: Kristina Paukshtine

## 8. Provide Technical Assistance to Small Businesses

### ACTION

Connect local, small businesses to technical assistance designed to solve specific challenges that they face due to the pandemic and related lockdowns.

### WHY

Many tourism and hospitality business owners will need access to advice to navigate the process of reopening, access relief funds, develop new products and services, navigate altered permitting processes, market and sell online, restructure debt, access capital, renegotiate leases, and or right-size their operations.

By providing access to technical assistance, governments and DMOs can help more of your small tourism businesses survive and leverage post-pandemic opportunities.

### BACKGROUND

To date, U.S. governments have supported travel and hospitality businesses mainly with grants, loans, forgivable loans, moratoria on evictions or penalties, extended repayment periods, and/or tax breaks or reductions of advance tax payments.

Bloomberg Associates' own experience supporting cities suggests it can be more effective to combine financial assistance with technical assistance, whether relating to physical adjustments, technology adoption, digital transformation, or alternative business models. In fact, funds without support and technical assistance can sometimes create problems for businesses.

## Case Study: London & Partners' Business Resilience Webinars

At the start of the pandemic, London & Partners, the city's international trade, investment, and promotion agency, saw that many tourism businesses were confused about the local down rules and their rights.

By being closely connected to several government task forces, the agency was able to [share information](#) with local businesses to help them plan for the months ahead.

The agency also created weekly or biweekly [business resilience webinars](#) for small businesses and agency members.

These webinars were used to update businesses on government rules and restrictions and how they were changing – essentially information that the businesses could use immediately.

They also created “morning coffee” sessions for business owners and employees who were furloughed and cut off from the rest of the industry. These sessions helped to build a sense of community and were used to share information, for example, debunking myths or identifying best practices.

Further, the agency partnered with business services companies to create business resilience webinars, which were used to provide technical assistance to businesses on topics ranging from “how to apply for grant and loan programs” to “searching for and securing office space during ‘new normal.’”

### Several U.S. cities have created similar programs, for example:

- [Detroit](#) partnered with Accenture (pro bono) to deliver workshops to help small businesses collaborate with their peers, collectively think about how to reinvent their business, and craft a roadmap for themselves.
- [New York City](#) partnered with the City Bar Justice Center to create the “COVID-19 Small Business Initiative.” 700 attorneys from nearly 75 law firms and in-house legal departments provided pro-bono assistance to some 500 small businesses on topics ranging from the application process for loans/grants and the terms of forgiveness, to questions relating to commercial leases and tenant obligations.
- [Chicago](#) partnered with 17 creative agencies, which pledged to donate 1% of all staff hours to pro bono support for Chicagoans, including guidance for small businesses.
- [NYC Hospitality Alliance](#) (a not-for-profit association which represents restaurant and nightlife businesses) solicited support and relief offers for hospitality businesses. These ranged from financial aid and pro bono consulting, to free online ordering and other business tools.

## HOW TO ADOPT THIS APPROACH

The current period of uncertainty presents opportunities for DMOs to offer guidance and support to their members.

DMOs will need to build a good understanding of their members' challenges and the questions that they are asking, and identify who is best placed to guide them. Sending out surveys can be helpful to selecting topics which will lead to good engagement.

At this time, many business services and technology companies are looking for opportunities to support local economic recovery, and you should use the office of the Mayor, a recovery task force, Chamber of Commerce, and/or nonprofit business alliance to identify and engage them.

If you are facilitating pro bono, one-to-one support to small businesses, it will also be important to provide staff who can play an intermediary role, aligning expectations and managing relationships.

While social distancing rules remain in place, you should make sure you are familiar with the different functionalities of online meeting and webinar platforms. While single speaker and panel events are easiest to execute, having break out rooms for discussion and networking – which can be done on Zoom – can add significant value.







# C.

## Actions to Create a Stronger Leisure Tourism Economy

### 9. Build Your Data Capacity and Digital Presence

#### ACTION

Build tools and partnerships to help you better understand, and boost, your online presence with target travelers.

#### WHY

The pandemic has increased digital screen time. More and more travelers are searching for travel inspiration online, and they increasingly expect technology to provide them with more personal control over their travel experiences.<sup>25</sup>

In a recent poll, 95% of travelers from 28 countries said they spent free time during the pandemic looking for travel inspiration, with 38% looking at potential destinations at least once a week.<sup>26</sup>

This has created opportunities for destinations to use aggregated, anonymized data, and/or to ask travelers for permission to access personal data to personalize marketing campaigns and offerings – which should achieve significantly higher open and click through rates.

<sup>25</sup> [www.iata.org/en/pressroom/pr/2017-10-24-02/](http://www.iata.org/en/pressroom/pr/2017-10-24-02/)

<sup>26</sup> [www.booking.com/articles/vital-value-maximising-travel-for-less.html](http://www.booking.com/articles/vital-value-maximising-travel-for-less.html)

## BACKGROUND

As we adapt to the new reality, destinations need to stimulate and capture the little demand that currently exists, and be ready to capitalize on pent up demand as things return to “new normal.”

Messages and promotions will, therefore, need to be relevant, given the behavior that specific consumers have developed during the pandemic. Has a traveler flown yet? Stayed in a hotel yet? Left their home state yet? Are they nervous to do so? What are their biggest concerns?<sup>27</sup>

Despite consumers saying that they are concerned about the privacy of their personal data, there is plenty of evidence that they are very willing to trade personal information for benefits or rewards – particularly monetary compensation, promotion incentives, and discounts based on their interests, and convenience and speed in using services.<sup>28</sup>

Personalized marketing technology has advanced rapidly in recent year and many brands – from Amazon<sup>29</sup> to Target<sup>30</sup> – have used behavioral targeting and predictive modelling to take marketing to a whole new level.

Travel and tourism industry examples of data tools to help personalize marketing, target sales, and/or enhance customer service, include:

- London Heathrow Airport’s [Connected Spaces](#) project, which enables the airport to better identify, understand, and engage with customers across all touchpoints of the airport.
- Virgin Hotel’s [Customer Wi-Fi](#) and Business Intelligence platform, which allows the hotel to acquire new customers, target sales offers, build loyalty with personalized communications, create campaigns based on contextual data, understand customers better through new insights, and refine audience segmentation.
- Singapore National Research Foundation’s [Virtual Singapore software](#), which can analyze visitor movements, with multiple applications for destination management.
- Lufthansa’s [Big Data Engine](#), which allows the airline to offer personal services, as well as upsell to customers.

<sup>27</sup> [www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/industries/travel%20transport%20and%20logistics/our%20insights/the%20travel%20industry%20turned%20upside%20down%20insights%20analysis%20and%20actions%20for%20travel%20executives/the-travel-industry-turned-upside-down-insights-analysis-and-actions-for-travel-executives.pdf](http://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/industries/travel%20transport%20and%20logistics/our%20insights/the%20travel%20industry%20turned%20upside%20down%20insights%20analysis%20and%20actions%20for%20travel%20executives/the-travel-industry-turned-upside-down-insights-analysis-and-actions-for-travel-executives.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> [www.genesys.com/media/2020-Genesys-Consumer-Survey-Results-Final.pdf](http://www.genesys.com/media/2020-Genesys-Consumer-Survey-Results-Final.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> [www.nytimes.com/2019/01/20/technology/amazon-ads-advertising.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/20/technology/amazon-ads-advertising.html)

<sup>30</sup> [www.driveresearch.com/market-research-company-blog/how-target-used-data-analytics-to-predict-pregnancies/](http://www.driveresearch.com/market-research-company-blog/how-target-used-data-analytics-to-predict-pregnancies/)

From our experience, very few cities or DMOs have the resources or know how to imitate leading retail or tourism players.

Fortunately, there are specialist tourism, ad-tech agencies, such as California's [Sojern](#) and [Adara](#), which offer digital travel marketing solutions and can deliver tourism marketing campaigns which microsegment audiences at scale.

Some DMOs, however, do have ambitions to become truly data-driven organizations, by building data solutions specifically for their destinations.

Bloomberg Associates has provided past advice to governments and DMOs which are seeking to understand each visitor – their behaviors and expectations – in order to provide a personalized experience.

It has been our experience that they have often struggled to progress these goals beyond individual marketing campaigns which offer personalized content. This is largely due to aversion to risk, limited technical skills, and/or legacy technology stacks.

Cities and DMOs should, therefore, approach this topic with their eyes open.

Below, we share some principles for DMOs that are thinking to build destination data platforms, which are drawn from our own consulting experience. We have also included, at Appendix 3, an infographic, which shows what an end-to-end data management platform solution could look like.



## Case Study

**Singapore's Tourism Analytics Network** (Stan) is an analytics platform for its DMO and tourism organizations, which contains monthly tourism data sets and visualizations.

It was created in 2016 for the Singapore Tourism Board (STA), initially as an internal management tool. The STA subsequently opened it to the general public.

The platform contains top line statistics, which are available to the general public, and more in-depth features, which are available to selected industry organizations with a login account. The platform is currently free for all users.

Its data sets and visualizations include:

- Visitor arrivals and seasonality
- Visitor segmentation and demographics
- Visitor spend (what visitors are buying, how much they are spending, what their interests are, etc.)
- Hotel statistics; and
- Visitor satisfaction rates.

The STA uses the platform to understand its visitors and to encourage industry collaboration. It has also developed a self-assessment tool for industry players to diagnose their current state of transformation and provide targeted insights to take action to stay relevant and thrive.

The STA is currently adding new features to the platform, which include:

- A data marketplace for industry players to share and consume tourism-related data; and
- A co-creation space equipped with predictive tools, for industry collaboration on data analytics projects.

## HOW TO ADOPT THIS APPROACH

Engage a local partner to create, initially, an internal dashboard/insights platform. E.g., Start by talking to your local [National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership](#) partner (if you have one), a local university, or community college.

Explore how you can complement existing data sets with third-party (including private sector) data and closer-to-real-time data.

Engage local industry players to understand what insights would help them to thrive.

Recognize that different tourism organizations will have different levels of tech and data literacy, so prioritize a very simple and intuitive user interface.

Distribute the platform for beta testing and get feedback as quickly as possible.

Once your platform has been released, take the time to publicize it and train industry organizations for different use cases. Continue to host training sessions as the product evolves.





Credit: Chris M. Miller

## 10. Give Those Returning to Travel a Reason to Visit

### ACTION

Develop digital marketing and communications campaigns which target early returning travelers with messages and offers that address their wants and needs.

### WHY

Once a destination has been able to contain COVID-19, its DMO should direct its attention back to promotion which will support economic recovery.

## BACKGROUND

Destinations should prioritize demographics which are likely to jumpstart the recovery, making sure their destination's product offerings match their passions, wants and needs, and are being marketed on "the right channels". (See Appendix 2 for guidance on creating traveler personas.)

Surveys and reports suggest "first wave" travelers are likely to be those who are most optimistic about travel – aged 25 to 34 and 65-plus.

The [International Air Transport Association](#) has identified the following six post-COVID traveler personas:

- The impatient innovator
- The young early majority
- The untroubled 55+
- The wait-and-see X and Y generations
- The late business trip, and
- The late leisure trip.

[Ketchum Travel's](#) "Transforming Travelers study" takes a different approach, identifying 4 personas which are based on how soon individuals will feel comfortable returning to their pre-COVID lives and activities; and how much the importance of various personal values has changed in response to COVID-19.

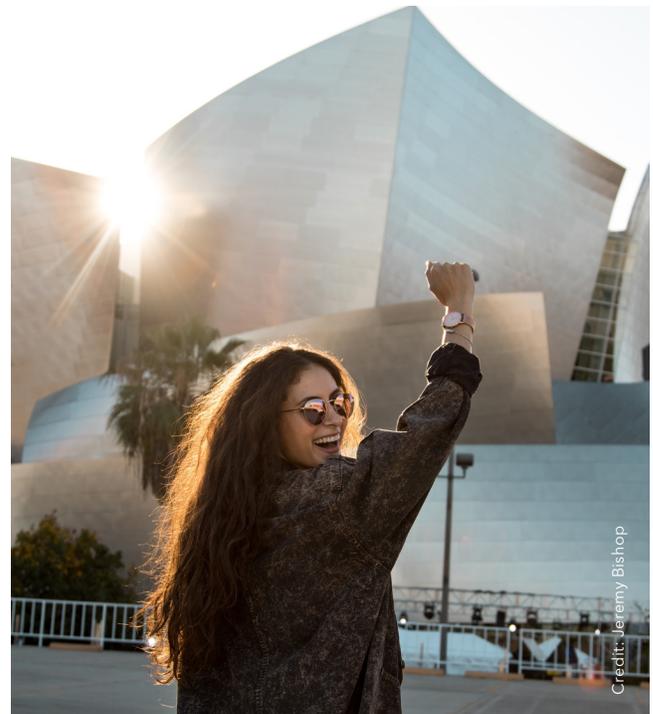
It is evident that COVID has made many travelers rethink the types of destinations they will select.

There is clearly strong interest in smaller and less crowded destinations, but there also appears to be a renewed interest in authentic and connected experiences.

Local communities can be crucial partners in designing these experiences, e.g., cooking classes, tours by locals, and insider talks.

For example, Melbourne-based [Free to Feed](#) offers immersive cooking experiences for visitors, which are delivered by refugees, people seeking asylum and new migrants.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is also increased interest in "once-in-a-lifetime trips," with travelers thinking "Why didn't I take that trip before, when I had the chance?" and "now that 'can't' has been put in front of me, it feels more urgent to do the things I've dreamed of doing."



Credit: Jeremy Bishop

# CAMPAIGN CHECKLIST:

It is our experience that DMOs are more likely to deliver a successful marketing campaign if they start by focusing on the following five questions:

## 1. Why are we doing this?

- Why is this the right objective? What are the benefits for the city? What will success look like?

## 2. Who are the right audiences to focus on?

- What are the right markets and personas? (Or, personal data sets?)

## 3. What messages and offers should we promote?



## 4. Where and how should we deliver these messages and offers?

- Which mediums and channels to raise awareness? To engage? To convert?
- Should we partner with a travel specialist digital agency?
- What are our calls to action?
- What is the role of PR in a brand-driven campaign?
- Who are the right partners (e.g. car rental companies, hotels/property sharing platforms, restaurants tour operators, attractions, cultural institutions, retailers, credit card companies, social media platforms, other destinations) What is their value? What is their need? What can we offer them?

## 5. When should we market to these audiences?

- When is the audience dreaming? Planning? Booking? Experiencing? Reminiscing?



## 11. Provide Technical Assistance to Small Businesses

### ACTION

Create strategies and partnerships that will make your destination more sustainable and inclusive. And tell that story to visitors.

### WHY

Since COVID-19, travelers, particularly younger travelers, have a heightened awareness of environmental sustainability and social and racial equity.<sup>31</sup> As a result, they are more likely to look for evidence that destinations are taking steps to address these issues.

### BACKGROUND

Numerous reports and studies have found that the pandemic has reinforced, even accelerated, people's views on sustainability, with more consumers focused on helping to create a better, healthier world.<sup>32</sup>

For example, 60% of travelers say that their future booking decisions would be influenced by sustainable initiatives at the property, even if it meant spending a modest premium.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> COVID-19 Global traveler sentiment survey, May 2020, Oliver Wyman.

<sup>32</sup> [www.bbc.com/news/business-55630144](http://www.bbc.com/news/business-55630144)

<sup>33</sup> [skift.com/2020/11/16/hostels-see-opportunity-in-the-backlash-against-plastic-%F0%9F%94%92/](https://skift.com/2020/11/16/hostels-see-opportunity-in-the-backlash-against-plastic-%F0%9F%94%92/)

Travelers' behavior, loyalty, and values are also being redefined by the economic downturn, restrictions in day-to-day living caused by COVID-19, and flashpoint events highlighting systemic racism within our communities.

It is widely expected that the pandemic will accelerate the trend of travelers seeking "travel with a purpose", with 67% of recently polled travelers saying they want their bookings to make a positive difference for communities affected by the pandemic.<sup>34</sup>

Travelers are also now placing greater importance on pre-trip planning.

Destinations can respond to these trends by developing a shared understanding of what it means to be a sustainable destination.

For example, Sedona, AZ engaged the Global Sustainable Tourism Council to conduct a [sustainability assessment](#) of its tourism economy.

The goal was to enable the destination to design and target policies, programs, and campaigns which demonstrate sustainable destination management, maximize economic benefits to the host community, and minimize negative impacts on the environment.

Programs could include:

- Sector-wide sustainable guidelines.
- Technical assistance to small businesses to help them adopt more sustainable practices (e.g., relating to energy and water use, single use plastics and recycling, food procurement, laundry operations, and reporting).
- Destination management tools to "nudge" visitors around the city, to manage crowds, and/or to help tourists engage local communities.
- Investments in green infrastructure.
- Communicating the destination's commitments to travelers.



Credit: Juliette Contin

<sup>34</sup> [www.booking.com/articles/vital-value-maximising-travel-for-less.html](http://www.booking.com/articles/vital-value-maximising-travel-for-less.html)

## Case Study

In 2020, the City of Boston drew down \$2.5M of CARES Act Federal relief funding to launch a marketing campaign to market the city to Black and Brown residents and visitors.

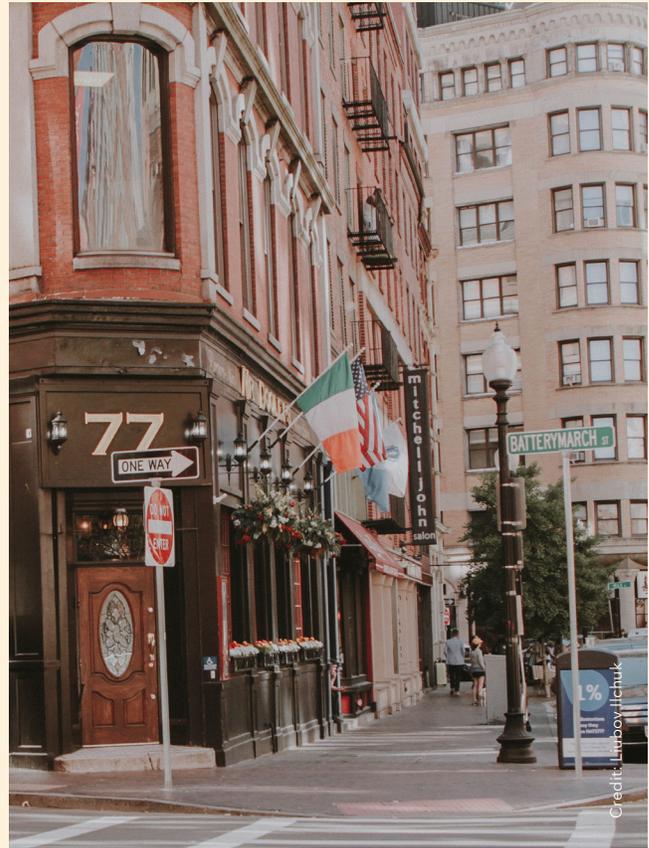
The campaign's goals were to "build Boston's brand as a travel destination, increase awareness and active promotion, and drive visits to Boston from diverse local and regional visitors." It was part of the city's strategy to build back a stronger and more equitable economy.

In particular, the campaign sought to "examine the ways in which Boston communicates about the offerings of the city, and highlight attractions and events that speak to the experiences of people of color."

The Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau selected two award-winning agencies with deep roots in the city. One was Boston's oldest, minority-owned and operated marketing communications agency. The other was a Boston-based, minority owned, award-winning creative branding, design, and advertising agency.

They soon discovered that the city had allowed others to create a narrative of Boston as an all white, masculine, sports- and alcohol- dominated city. Visitors and some residents had low awareness of the city's vibrant Black neighborhoods, and the contributions of Black and Brown residents to the city.

The campaign featured different Boston neighborhoods with neighborhood [maps](#) and guides and short-form [videos](#), as well as social media influencers from some of the city's oldest Black



neighborhoods. It also celebrated Black and Brown-owned businesses in local and national media, in order to drive local spend.

Like many campaigns during the pandemic, its primary audience was local residents. However, as travel becomes safer, the city plans to continue its efforts to encourage a wider audience to change their perceptions and, ultimately, actions.



# Appendix 1

## CHECKLIST FOR A CITY TOURISM RECOVERY PLAN

TOPIC	COMMENTARY
<p>1. Do you have clear, published success measures for tourism in a post-pandemic economy?</p>	<p>Most DMOs set numeric goals around volume, value, repeat visitors and city reputation. Some DMOs focus on distribution of visitor spend between neighborhoods. Good DMOs can also attribute additional spend directly to their actions – spend that wouldn't have happened otherwise.</p>
<p>2. Is your local tourism industry working together to manage and promote your destination?</p>	<p>Now is the time to ask your Mayor and/or a leading industry figure to play a larger role to galvanize your industry behind a single city or regional vision and brand</p>
<p>3. Do you know your audiences, their passions, wants and needs, and what will influence their behaviors?</p>	<p>Local, regional, and domestic travelers will be your priority in the coming year. As many vaccination programs are prioritizing older people first, they could be in the vanguard of returning visitors in 2021.</p> <p>Many DMOs make the mistake of talking, rather than listening, to their target audiences. There are many ways to gain insights into your audiences, including free and paid-for market reports, social media listening tools, online surveys and partnerships with specialist travel marketing agencies, such as Sojern and Adara.</p>
<p>4. Do you know when and how your audiences will want to travel?</p>	<p>Local, regional, and domestic travelers will be your priority in the coming year. As many vaccination programs are prioritizing older people first, they could be in the vanguard of returning visitors in 2021.</p> <p>Many DMOs make the mistake of talking, rather than listening, to their target audiences. There are many ways to gain insights into your audiences, including free and paid-for market reports, social media listening tools, online surveys and partnerships with specialist travel marketing agencies, such as Sojern and Adara.</p>
<p>5. What are your audiences' awareness and perceptions of your destination?</p>	<p>Many DMOs may struggle to justify spending public funds on brand marketing campaigns while there is enormous pressure on municipal budgets. Also, city brands tend to be fairly stable and are not changed overnight,<sup>35</sup> so this may not be your top priority.</p>
<p>6. What do your audiences know about your attractions, events and offerings?</p>	<p>Bucket-list cities, which have resources to do marketing, may want to focus on extending their offering, while non-bucket list cities should focus on raising awareness and giving local and regional audiences a reason to travel.</p> <p>In both cases, the priorities should be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn (rather than buy) PR coverage, and</li> <li>• Engage your audiences, through their preferred social media channels.</li> </ul> <p>You may want to think about partnerships with freelance journalists, social media influencers and/or local celebrities</p> <p>Websites, social media, email marketing and PR can also play a part in communicating regular updates to your audiences, to give them the assurances they need that it is safe for them to visit your destination.</p>

<sup>35</sup> The Anholt City Brands Index

TOPIC	COMMENTARY
<p><b>7. How can you reach your audiences cost-effectively?</b></p>	<p>Even before the pandemic, most DMOs reached their audiences online. The pandemic has accelerated the online shift, but the optimal partnership mix may have changed post-pandemic.</p> <p>For example, in the short term, OTAs may be less relevant for reaching local and regional audiences. Other platforms, on the other hand, may have become more important. E.g.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile, computing and console games (“everyone was gaming” during lockdown);</li> <li>• Trip planning platforms (Pinterest added many users in 2020); and</li> <li>• Home-sharing platforms (home rentals significantly outperformed hotels during the pandemic).</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Are your attractions, events and offerings interesting and attractive to your audiences?</b></p>	<p>The pandemic may have caused hotels, restaurants and bars, attractions, and cultural institutions to shut down permanently. While some larger cities may be able to support, or invest in, such businesses, smaller cities may not have the resources to maintain capacity in the sector.</p> <p>Therefore, building back better will involve focusing on attractions and offerings which were already taking off, and are expected to become even more popular post-pandemic – e.g., sustainable travel, travel with a social purpose, wellness travel experiences, arts and cultural offerings, and immersive pop-up activations.</p>
<p><b>9. Have you made it easy for your audiences to book and discover your city?</b></p>	<p>You should revisit questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have all your information in one place?</li> <li>• Is the most searched for information the easiest to find?</li> <li>• Are your offerings packaged? (E.g. train + hotel + tickets + office space + top-10 sites + walking map)</li> </ul>
<p><b>10. Does your sales team have defined target lists for the second half of 2021, as well as for the next 3 years – which it is aggressively pursuing?</b></p>	<p>There may be cultural, sporting and other events, which were previously not a good fit for your city, but which are now being reconfigured/downsized, and could come into play.</p> <p>Native/neighboring businesses may also be able to hold more of their meetings/events locally in the coming years.</p>
<p><b>11. In the event of a bounce-back when we reach a degree of normality, will venues/hotels, which had been put to alternative uses during the pandemic, as well as non-traditional venues (e.g. retail and restaurant spaces), be available to host events?</b></p>	<p>Some CVBs are forecasting that segments of the MICE market will come racing back in the next 6-24 months (forecasts vary significantly!).</p> <p>Some cities have told us that they expect some venues to be busy in the second half of 2021.</p> <p>If these forecasts prove to be accurate (and not everyone agrees), cities could look now at non-traditional spaces, which have become vacant during the pandemic – such as industrial, retail and restaurant spaces – and could be rented for events and pop-up activations.</p> <p>However, cities should also look at the costs needed to upgrade the spaces, so that they have quality IT/AV systems, and/or event organizers are able to bring in plug-and-play systems.</p>

TOPIC	COMMENTARY
<b>12. How can you make it more worthwhile and convenient for someone to attend an event in person?</b>	<p>Many commentators believe that, after we reach a degree of normality, business travelers will want to travel less, but for longer.</p> <p>DMOs may want to think about new packages for business travelers and event goers, e.g., offering remote working facilities and “workcation”/“bleisure” packages – such as an apartment with an office, a pool and weekend excursions.</p>
<b>13. How will you manage with a smaller budget in the future?</b>	<p>Bloomberg Associates has published a <a href="#">tactical guide</a> on new sources of operating funding for economic development programming, some of which may be relevant for programming to support your tourism economy.</p>

# Appendix 2

## GUIDANCE ON CREATING A NEIGHBORHOOD TOURISM CAMPAIGN

PROCESS STEP	EXAMPLES	HOW TO...
1. <b>WHY</b> are we doing this and what does success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support local businesses</li> <li>• Increase vibrancy in the neighborhood</li> <li>• Build the neighborhood's reputation in order to distribute tourists in the future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align with Mayoral vision</li> <li>• Engage local community leaders</li> </ul>
2. <b>WHO</b> are the right markets to target?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents</li> <li>• Day trippers</li> <li>• Interstaters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw on research, re: the timing and shape of the tourism economy</li> </ul>
3. <b>WHO</b> are the right audiences to target?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History buffs who want to discover local heritage, or</li> <li>• Urban adventurers who want to experience local culture and lifestyle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify who your target audiences are (see memo on personas, below)</li> </ul>
4. <b>WHAT</b> messages and offers should we promote to them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• International cultures</li> <li>• Wellness</li> <li>• Outdoor</li> <li>• Exploration/authentic</li> <li>• Local interactions</li> <li>• Personal growth</li> <li>• Giving back</li> <li>• Workcation/staycation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make inventory of neighborhood attractions</li> <li>• Cross reference them against your target audiences' passions, wants and needs</li> <li>• Identify priorities to invest in the development/management of neighborhood tourism offerings</li> </ul>



PROCESS STEP	EXAMPLES	HOW TO...
5. <b>HOW</b> should we craft the messages and offers to attract and engage them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood brand/positioning</li> <li>• Mapping tools</li> <li>• Pop-ups</li> <li>• Subscriptions</li> <li>• Challenges/rewards</li> <li>• Gamification</li> <li>• Part-virtual</li> <li>• Contactless</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek inspiration from other destinations' and brands' creative concepts</li> <li>• Invite local communities to submit ideas</li> </ul>
6. <b>WHERE, WHEN</b> and <b>HOW</b> should we deliver these messages and offers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media/online forums</li> <li>• Local media/press</li> <li>• Email newsletters</li> </ul>	(See memo on personas, below)
7. <b>WHAT</b> might stop us being successful?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputation</li> <li>• Crime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate symbolic actions, e.g., local investments, brand ambassador endorsement, welcome/social distancing ambassadors</li> </ul>
8. <b>WHO</b> are the right partners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel bloggers/social influencers</li> <li>• Local media/press</li> <li>• Out of home ads/transit authority</li> <li>• BIDs/SIDs</li> <li>• Historical societies</li> <li>• Local tour operators</li> <li>• Payment processing companies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage groups/individuals who can represent and have the trust of local communities</li> </ul>

## GUIDANCE ON CREATING AND USING TRAVELER PERSONAS

- Create traveler personas to help you identify your target audiences
- Start with your own knowledge base, your partners' insights, and research reports done by travel brands, like Pinterest and Skift
- Recognize that the creation/use of personas is "an art, not a science," and should be an iterative process
- Refine your personas as you test and learn what works

### PROCESS STEP

#### 1. Start by trying to answer the following questions:

- Who are the existing travelers to your target neighborhoods?
- Who continues to come back on a regular basis?
- Who acts as a brand ambassador, leaves positive reviews, shares with his/her social networks?

#### 2. Then segment your audiences by building out personas of your target audiences. (This may necessitate a demographic survey.)

- What age range?
- What gender?
- What marital status, or travel party composition (couple, family with children, etc.)
- What ethnicity? What languages spoken at home?
- Where is s/he traveling from?
- What employment status or income?
- When s/he is likely to visit?
- How long is s/he likely to stay (hours, day trip, overnight, longer)?
- Where/what type of accommodation will s/he want?
- How will s/he travel to the neighborhood (car, train, bus, on foot)?
- What things are s/he interested in (heritage, food, recreational activities, street art, etc.)?
- What experiences are s/he looking for (e.g., international culture, events, etc.)?
- What things are s/he concerned about (crime, crowds, language barriers)?
- Where does s/he get her information from?
- What s/he looks like (include an image to help you visualize the persona you're trying to create)

### HOW TO...

Draw on the following tools to help create your personas

- Google/Facebook analytics for tourism and neighborhood websites
- Social media scraping tools for Facebook groups/online forums
- Online reviews, such as on Eater, Tastemade, and Book Club
- Location business surveys, and your own knowledge and experience



#### WHAT IS A USER PERSONA?

User personas are **fictitious characters** put together by product, design, and marketing teams to **represent** the types of people that could become users.

#### USER PERSONA CHECKLIST

 Name	 Photo	 Bio	 Motivations
 Personal Motto	 Demographics	 Personality Traits	 Preferred Brands and Influences

Source: clevertap.com

PROCESS STEP	HOW TO...
<p>3. Next, try to find your personas online.</p>	<p>Find your personas by drawing on tools such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facebook targeting (which offers location, age, gender, relationship status, children, employment, birthday, interests and some behaviors)</li><li>• Google audience, content or keyword targeting</li></ul>
<p>4. Finally, shine a spotlight on neighborhood attractions, which are the best fit for your personas' travel needs, on the channels where your personas spend time.</p>	

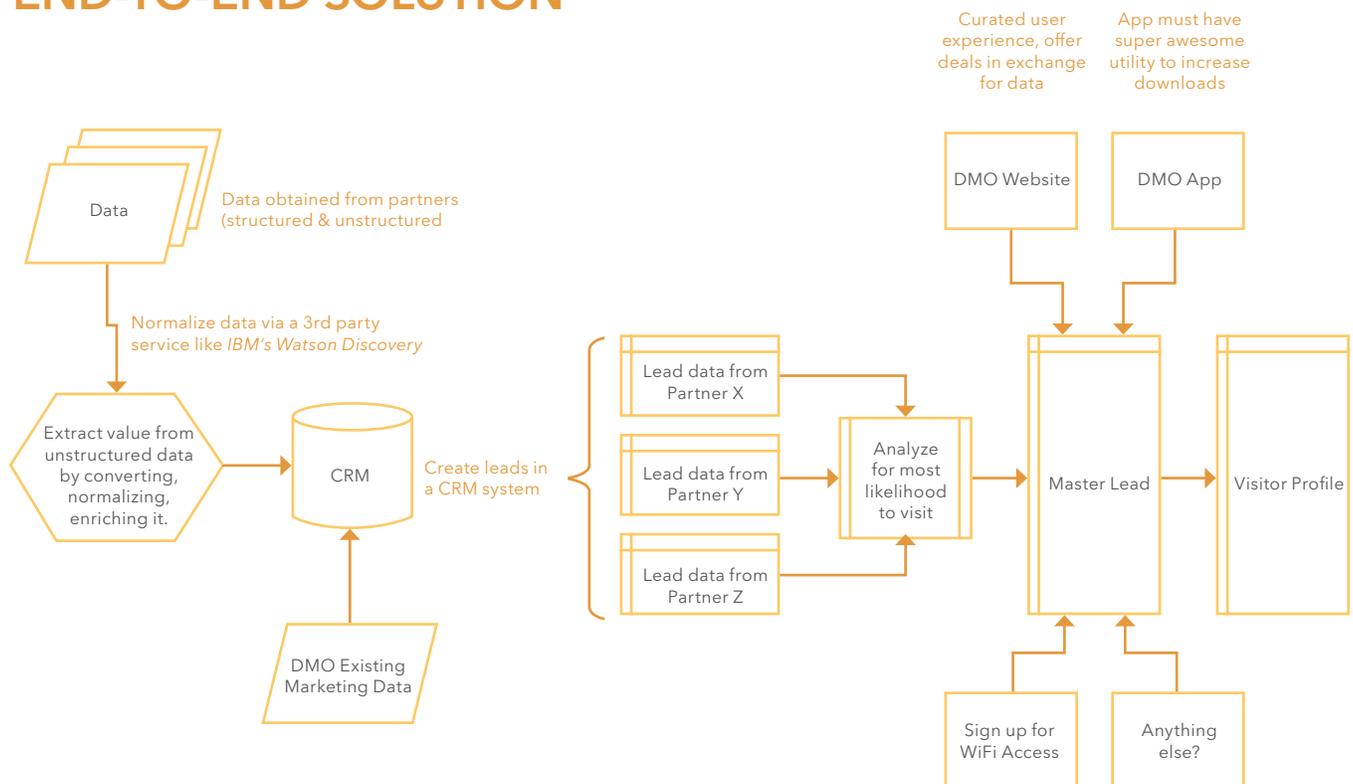
# Appendix 3

## EXAMPLE OF A DESTINATION'S ENGAGED CRM DATA HUB

Example of an end-to-end solution for an engaged CRM hub that uses off-the-shelf hardware/software, and would enable a destination to:

- Present relevant information, in real time, across all digital and traditional communications channels, based on knowledge of visitors' interests and likes
- Maintain relationships with visitors by staying in touch via chatbots, newsletters and direct marketing initiatives with information that is relevant to their changing likes and interests.

## END-TO-END SOLUTION



## ABOUT BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES COVID-19 RESPONSE

Bloomberg Philanthropies' multi-pronged COVID-19 Response supports public health professionals and local leaders around the world in their efforts to mitigate the health, economic, and social consequences of the pandemic. Our response includes immediate support in low-income and middle-income countries most at-risk, resources for mayors and other local leaders, and support for social services and cultural organizations in the communities where the Bloomberg L.P. and Bloomberg Philanthropies' team lives and works.

- Globally, we are funding rapid response efforts – including equipment and training for frontline healthcare workers – in Africa and other low-income and middle-income countries around the world. We are also supporting vulnerable refugee populations around the world
- In the U.S., we are working with New York Governor, Andrew Cuomo, to launch a COVID-19 contact tracing program to help control the infection rate of the disease. We've also created a robust platform through our COVID-19 Local Response Initiative to support mayors and other local leaders
- In New York and London, we've helped launch funds to support local cultural and social service organizations affected by the pandemic and provided funding to feed frontline healthcare workers in 16 NYC hospitals
- We are also supporting research, including studies at Johns Hopkins University and NYU Langone Health

Learn more about our efforts at [bloomberg.org/covid-19-response](https://bloomberg.org/covid-19-response)

## ABOUT BLOOMBERG ASSOCIATES

Bloomberg Associates is the philanthropic consulting arm of Michael R. Bloomberg's charitable organization, Bloomberg Philanthropies. Founded in 2014, we work side by side with client cities to improve the quality of life for residents, taking a strategic, collaborative, and results-oriented approach to make cities stronger, safer, more equitable and more efficient. Our team of globally recognized experts and industry leaders has worked with cities across the globe on hundreds of projects in order to ignite change and transform a dynamic vision into reality.



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