

PLANNING FOR A BETTER FUTURE: TOURISM MARKETING DURING CORONAVIRUS



Darren Seward
Sector Lead for
Hospitality & Food
& Drink

For businesses that are used to attracting and welcoming visitors, the amount of free time the current restrictions bring may feel very alien and it's easy for anxiety to set in. It might be hard for tourism and hospitality businesses to believe in brighter times at the moment, yet they will come. Those who survive will be the ones who look to the future and start to actively plan for recovery now.

In the last 30 years, the industry has experienced plenty of crises such as: Recession, Foot & Mouth, and floods and we've seen many existing businesses get through the other side of these and even new businesses being formed.

Recovery may be some time away, but you can use this time productively. Here are some ideas to consider to ensure your business is ready to bounce back.

LOOK AT YOUR BUSINESS THROUGH THE EYES OF YOUR CUSTOMER

When did you last walk through your business, experiencing it the way a guest might? Now might be the time to experience your rooms as guests do. What are your first impressions? Consider the signage and décor, does it give the right impression? It may be an opportunity to remove those window stickers and notices that are long out of date or update the images on your website.

REVIEW YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY

Most tourism and hospitality businesses use a combination of marketing techniques to attract visitors; website, social media, direct mail, PR & advertising. Most would love to reduce their reliance on online travel agents and attract more direct trade which could make their marketing more effective and possibly reduce costs. We unexpectedly have the opportunity to improve on our marketing, by considering how the different elements can work together to be more effective.



AUDIT YOUR WEBSITE

Things to consider

- Does every page have a purpose?
- How clear are your contact and book/buy messages?
- Which images do you need to update?
- How clear are your selling points?
- Do you offer enough location information and highlight suppliers to show your links with the local community?
- How does your website compare to those of your competitors?

GET YOUR IMAGE LIBRARY IN ORDER

Label all your images so your business name and selling points are clear. If tagged correctly, this can help with search engine optimisation and make life easier for any journalists you send them to. Consider which additional images are needed inside, outside and around your business.

START A BLOG

A blog can enhance your website, with more informal content, demonstrating the personality of your business and highlighting what sets you apart. You might not be able to publish all the blogs you can manage to write at the moment, but once the pandemic has passed, you'll have a stack of them ready for future marketing.

CONTINUE TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA

This might not be the time to fully showcase your business and entice people to visit, however, it is a good time to send out 'maintenance messages', to keep in touch with guests and customers. You might even be able to boost your cash flow by selling gift vouchers.

Take the time to plan your social media content and make sure you are using the platforms your visitors use for maximum visibility. Make a plan for future posts so you can simply pop into

your accounts and add your messages, without having to search for inspiration from others.

Decide what you want to say and determine your primary and secondary selling points so you can make a list of all the different ways you can get your message across – in posts, images, videos and enhanced content. Create a content calendar to schedule your activity and ensure messages land at the right time. Don't forget to respond to comments in real time to enhance engagement.

LEARNING A NEW SKILL

Learning a new skill might also enhance your business. This could be learning a new language through Duolingo or how to give a virtual tour so you can welcome international guests. You could even develop some creative skills to use in your promotions with free online tools.

TAKE INSPIRATION FROM NEW, INFORMAL PARTNERSHIPS

We often talk about collaborating and sharing best practice but how many of us do this in reality? Now could be a good time to develop some new informal partnerships and consider how you can co-promote in future.

Even during the difficult times, new opportunities will present themselves. Now might be a good time to consider some new product development or creating experiences that you could promote in future.

One of our partners, Tourism Knowhow, offer free online marketing workshops and programmes which you can register for on their website. These can be used to explore practical activities to make your marketing stronger, and plan for better times. Visit tourismknowhow.com to sign up.

If you would like more information, please contact your local Agent.



NFU Mutual

To find out more about how we use your personal information and your rights, please go to nfumutual.co.uk/privacy.

To stop us contacting you for marketing write to Marketing Department (Do Not Contact Me), NFU Mutual, Tiddington Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 7BJ or contact your local agency.

The National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited (No.111982). Registered in England. Registered office: Tiddington Road, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire CV37 7BJ. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. A member of the Association of British Insurers.

LEA-TSCV-0420