

REIGNITING TRAVEL

*Tourism Recovery
Marketing Workbook*



**Thinking Beyond
The Buzzwords
to Find Your Spark.**



Hello There.

We're a collaborative of award winning tourism and event marketers who believe in the power of experiential messaging.

Need a powerful strategy, data backed research, compelling creative, or new ideas to reach potential visitors?

Consider your quest complete.



OUR CURRENT MARKETING CLIMATE

We must recognize that market recovery is in a different stage for each of us.

Since Coronavirus swept the world, data miners, analysts, and reporters have worked desperately to answer the question:

“What’s next for travel?”



OUR CURRENT MARKETING CLIMATE

Visitation forecasts segmented by location and travel sector are published quite frequently... and the numbers indicating intent appear substantial enough for many to make it through to 2021.

However, this data means only so much when positioned against the political climates of individual locations. Layer in cultural positions on behavior, historical seasonality, and the amount of funds readily available to your competitors, and it soon becomes obvious that marketing opportunity in our current climate is as personal and unique as they come.

- Let's check out where a few of the world's top attractions stand. Notice how the Taj Mahal is still closed? Recovery for the "big guys" is not uniform.
- Even as tourism slowly restarts in an increasing number of countries, it remains at a standstill in many nations." - in depth report from United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
- A look at projected losses in US travel by sector in 2020. Graph, Forbes



U.S. Travel Industry Set To Lose Over \$500 Billion In 2020

Estimated direct losses for the U.S. travel industry due to COVID-19*



OUR CURRENT MARKETING CLIMATE



Cross reference that with the following intent reports and your eyes may get a little crossed!

- A Travel Leaders Network survey of nearly 2,700 frequent travelers found that half are starting to make plans for their next vacation or have already made plans, while the other half say they are dreaming of when they can travel again. Fifty percent of those surveyed said they plan to take their next vacation in 2020. [Travel Agent Central](#)
- Americans are exhibiting some signs of optimism as they look out at their travel future. Now, 16.0% say they expect to take more leisure trips in the next 12 months than they did in the previous year. [Destination Analysts](#)



THINK BEYOND THE BUZZWORDS

So what does this mean?

For one, it indicates that there is no one solution for tourism recovery marketing.

Beware of “shiny toy syndrome”!

It may be overwhelming to discover your unique evolution in market positioning. Planning for it soon becomes a game of cat and mouse.

However, if you simply follow the buzzwords de facto without first aligning them to your needs, you will be wasting a lot of time and possibly a ton of money.

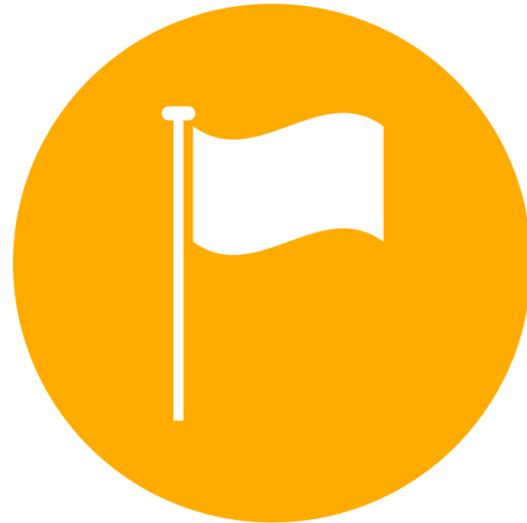
In this workbook, we’ll simplify that qualification process and guide you towards creating a sound mind to find your next steps.

It’s time to simplify. Let’s get started.



WHERE ARE YOU?

SIT



WALK



RUN



To kick things off, we must consider if your unique market climate allows for visitation at all.

From there, we can qualify if we should “sit, walk, or run.”

SIT. WALK. RUN.

Important!

Keep in mind that it is common to feel a sense of urgency, anxiety, confusion or loss in our current time period. This is human. This is normal. We are all experiencing trauma.

Do not let these mental factors weigh into your consideration of which stage of marketing you should be in. If you are driven by anxiety or anything other than a calm and clear mind, you risk a big loss of time and investment.

- You will get to where you need to be. Be safe and do NOT rush things!!
- Practice self care.
- Assess your environment. Then proceed to planning.



ARE YOU CURRENTLY RESTRICTED FROM PROVIDING TRAVEL SERVICES AT ALL? SIT!



ARE YOU ABLE TO PROVIDE TRAVEL SERVICES BUT AT A LIMITED OR EXTREMELY LIMITED BASIS? WALK!



ARE YOU ONE OF THE FEW WHO CAN PROVIDE TRAVEL SERVICES SOMEWHAT FREELY TO GUESTS? RUN!

BREAKING DOWN THE BUZZ

Now that we've assessed our stance and we've moved into the right mindset, it's time to take action.

Enough with the buzzwords, right? Are you sick of hearing about local marketing or virtual tours?

We feel you. We are too.

However, when implemented creatively and not in literal form, some of them can be pretty handy tactics.

TIME TO BREAK IT DOWN

**KNOW YOUR
STANCE?**



**LET'S START
PLANNING**



BUZZWORD #1

LOCAL MARKETING



In a nutshell:

Local marketing refers to a change in your standard audience targeting. Instead of marketing to future tourists in key feeder cities, regional drive, and fly/drive in-destination, we're now looking to our own theoretical backyards. We're talking same day, short drive radius, and extension from a tourist-focused demographic to a person who may already share the culture that you're selling.

What this does NOT mean:

Local marketing does not mean simply strapping down some geo targeting. This is a different type of visitor altogether, and one who's not even sold on "tours" as an idea in the first place. These are not tourists who are in town. Think beyond the term "tourist" altogether.

How to take advantage:

To connect with this market, you need to sharpen your competitive edge with the fierceness of a tiger that skipped breakfast. You are no longer competing with other tours, attractions, or destinations. You are now rivaling Netflix, neighborhood bike rides, and anything imaginable to do that is safe and within driving range. **You need to be interesting and special.** Think about your messaging. Is it compelling enough? Is your brand positioning differentiated enough from your competitors?



BUZZWORD #1

LOCAL MARKETING

GREAT:

“Suzy’s Tour Company -
Explore Historic Sights of Chicago
That Time Forgot”

NOT SO GREAT:

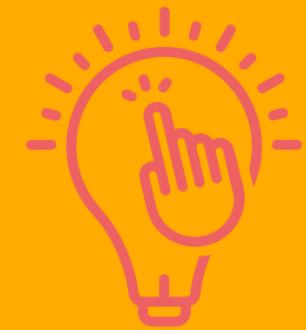
“Suzy’s Tour Company -
The Best Tours of Chicago”

YOUR POSTIONING:

WHAT TO DO

Go outside of your business and walk around, with a mask.

See where people are patroning. Look at the types of things they are doing. Use this info for possible partnerships with these places or ads in their arenas.



INSPIRATION

[Hubspot's Guide To Local Marketing.](#)

[Local Marketing Tourpreneur Podcast](#)



BUZZWORD #2

VIRTUAL TOURS

In a nutshell:

Virtual tours have become buzzworthy because in lockdown we've moved to virtual everything. Per Think With Google, "searches related to 'virtual tours' have grown globally by over 500% year over year,3 suggesting people may prefer an alternative to in-person tours until they feel safe." There have been some noted instances of success, particularly when virtual tours are paired with actual, real life experiences, such as food or wine pairings. It is a possible way to make ticket sales come in, if done really well, but overall it's been found to be a general marketing and SEO tool.

What this does NOT mean:

Launching a virtual tour does not mean recording what you do on your phone, popping it onto a protected website link, and then selling access tickets to create ample sales.

How to take advantage:

If you wish to sell your virtual tour for profit, you will need to get creative. Think: "How can I add an interactive component to this experience? How can it be better than an actual visit one day? How would this compare to my competitor's virtual tours?" If you believe that virtual tours are best suited as an engagement lead, great social content, or a foundation for SEO, then still be creative. In this case, however, we recommend creating more than one virtual tour and showcasing various points of interest.



BUZZWORD #2

VIRTUAL TOURS



INSPIRATION

[Trip School's Virtual Tour Directory.](#)

[Forbes best virtual tours list.](#)

"According to Google Keyword Planner data, searches for the term 'virtual tour' increased seven times—from 1,300 in February to almost 10,000 in March, when governments around the world began locking down countries and cities."

WHY WOULD THIS WORK FOR MY BRAND?

- Have Time
- Interesting Product
- Clear Expectations

SHOULD I SPEND TIME ON THIS WITH ALL OTHER MARKETING VENTURES CONSIDERED?

- Yes
- No

WHAT IS THE MOST INTERESTING THING I CAN SHOWCASE?

BUZZWORD #3

SEO



In a nutshell:

SEO stands for “Search Engine Optimization” and is the practice of increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to your website through organic search engine results. It refers to the work one does behind the scenes to have their content ranked well in organic SERPS. (Search engine results pages.) With everyone stuck at home searching for future travel destinations from their phone, many tourism entities have moved focus on appearing more often within queries. (For reference, bounceback in Polish tourism related searches.)

What this does NOT mean:

SEO is a long game. Per Search Engine Journal, ranking for just one term can take from 4 months up to an entire year. Is it useful? ABSOLUTELY. Will it help your business in the immediate? Probably not. If you’re looking towards SEO to get immediate visitation, you may wish to reassess your game plan.

How to take advantage:

It is best to implement SEO along with a strategic plan. Check into your Google Analytics or Google Webmasters accounts to find the terms your site ranks well for AND has lower competition. Then begin creating content based on those terms. Post links to that content everywhere! Then keep at it and be patient. Remember, you can always hire a professional agency to help plan or kickstart the initiative for you.



BUZZWORD #3

SEO

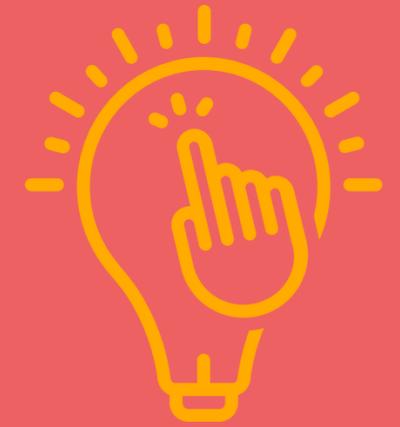
WHY WOULD THIS WORK FOR MY BRAND?

- Have Time
- Interesting Product
- Clear Expectations

SHOULD I SPEND TIME ON THIS WITH ALL OTHER MARKETING VENTURES CONSIDERED?

- Yes
- No

WHAT ARE SOME KEYWORDS I CAN RANK FOR AND WHY?



INSPIRATION

[Checkfront's Guide Local Marketing Guide for Experience Providers \(Great with SEO\)](#)

[Here's How To Blog For SEO](#)



BUZZWORD #4

SOCIAL MEDIA

In a nutshell:

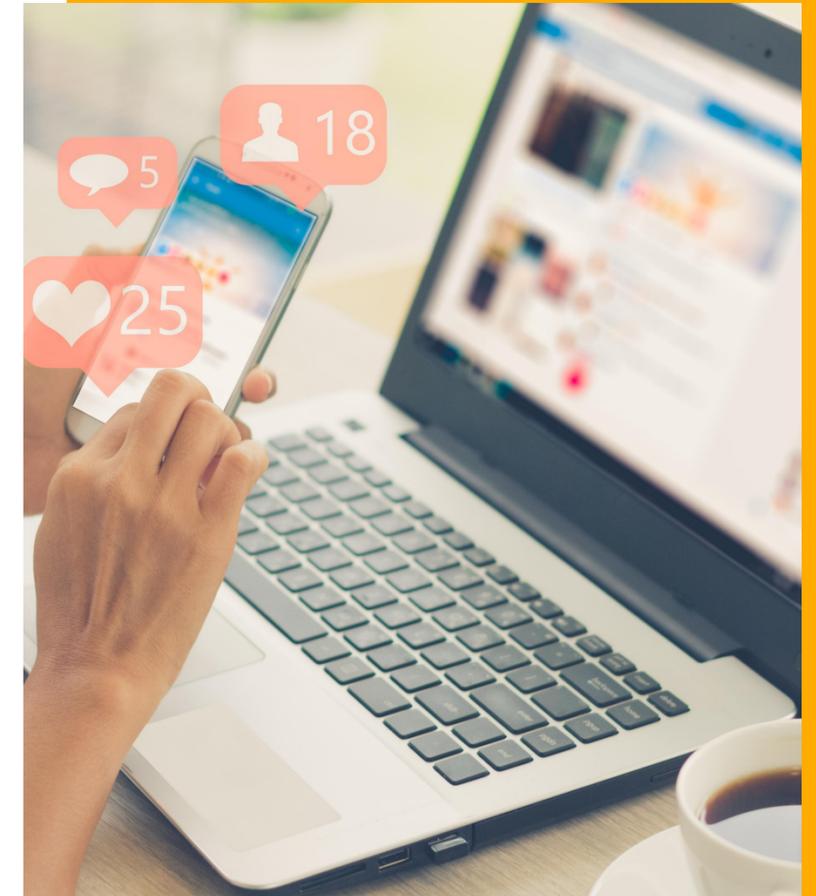
Social media has been a key player in tourism marketing for years. And for good measure. It produces excellent results! Historically, social has been a higher tier of the purchase decision mindset with regard to tourism. Think of it as a medium for “planting the seed” for the idea and keeping the message going. However, as the new Coronavirus environment has led to a nod towards local marketing, social has taken on an entirely new stance as a more immediate way to capture leads.

What this does NOT mean:

When we think to the importance of social media in the now, we need to remember that we are 1) focusing on lead capture and 2) keeping our brand relevant. Social media management does not mean posting organically throughout every channel in the world! Instead, we need to go in with a plan and focus on an end goal. And that means looking to the channels that matter most and the messages most likely to convert.

How to take advantage:

Take a look at how you currently manage your social media. What do you spend the most time on? Does this actively collect visitation or leads for future visits? How is this qualified? We recommend creating an action plan to effectively cultivate lead capture and brand recognition. Actively spend the most time on the medium that produces the best results. (This will likely be Facebook.) Create interactive and engaging content. Look into social media marketing via Facebook Ads, as they are known to produce results.



BUZZWORD #4

SOCIAL MEDIA



INSPIRATION

[Social media tourism brands that got it right!](#)

[Coronavirus safety video example from Royal Carriages.](#)

[Excellent resource for CVB's and direct brands from Visit Scotland.](#)

ARE MY BUSINESS DETAILS CURRENT ON SOCIAL ACCOUNTS AND ARE THERE NOTES ABOUT COVID SAFETY?

Yes

No

CAN I CLEAN UP WHERE I SPEND MY TIME ON SOCIAL? HOW?

HOW CAN I USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO INCREASE VISITATION?

- Deals & Discounts
- List Activity Events
- Geo Targeted Marketing
- Geo Targeted Events Based Marketing
- Partner Posts
- Facebook/Insta Live
- Interactive Content
- Activations



BUZZWORD #5

PARTNERSHIPS



In a nutshell:

Coronavirus has created a market that houses far fewer potential visitors than normal. The idea of partnerships and collaborations is to capture the interest of those who are already comfortable with the understood medical risk of patronizing businesses, evidenced by their most recent behavior. In essence, if people are venturing out to a restaurant, they may be keen to visit an attraction as well. Creating a partnership with a more opportune business may be a great strategy. And by forming a collective of experiences, ad dollars carry much more weight.

What this does NOT mean:

Be careful not to spend time establishing a partnership or joining a collab if there isn't a perceived or illustrated opportunity for success. These ideas may work for your brand down the line, but they may not produce in the immediate.

How to take advantage:

In revisiting our note from local marketing, do your research and get a tangible, real life view of the current market ecosystem. From there, do some homework on digital. Make a list of top of mind brands that may be getting great engagement or traction on social, then reach out and ask for a partnership where YOUR brand can add value too. Browse the web to see if there is currently a collaborative that you can ask to join. If you are a DMO or CVB, consider creating a collaborative effort for your experience listings to go along with accommodations bookings.



BUZZWORD #5

PARTNERSHIPS

WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESSES OR BRANDS WOULD SUIT MINE FOR A COLLABORATION?

ARE THESE BUSINESSES OR BRANDS FRUITFUL AND OPEN TO COLLAB?

HOW WILL WE WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE OFFER AND USE AD DOLLARS MOST WISELY?



INSPIRATION

[Check out Shreveport-Bossier's hotel package "Press Play" deals as an example.](#)

[Adventure Travel Trade Association's work with Cleveland Clinic on COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines.](#)

BUZZWORD #6

PIVOT

In a nutshell:

Pivoting is a tactic used to generate sales sooner than later. It entails providing an entirely new service or service type than had been available pre-COVID. This is an understandably tricky endeavor and should only be taken on with absolute care. However, if done well and serves a real need, pivoting can be a very successful tactic. [See Pierpont Place and Premier Event Services's move to flower arrangements.](#)

What this does NOT mean:

If you are exploring the idea of pivoting, make sure to have done your research first. We do not recommend launching a product that is super similar to what you already have. This may be easy to do as it stays within your comfort zone. We also do not recommend pivoting for the sake of pivoting. Remember what we said about "shiny toy syndrome."

How to take advantage:

Get a feel for an actual need in your current environment and then see if you already have the tools to solve this need. [Basecamp Europe](#) did this to success by moving from tours to camping gear rental, and they have now launched a summer camp as well.



BUZZWORD #6

PIVOT

HOW CAN MY BRAND'S EMPLOYEE KNOWLEDGE, TANGIBLE RESOURCES, OR LOCALITY LEAD TO ANOTHER ENDEAVOR?

IS THIS ENDEAVOR IN DEMAND?

Yes

No

HOW MUCH OVERHEAD WOULD IT COST FOR SET UP AND EXPOSURE?



INSPIRATION

[Pivoting the Business: Small Business Survival in Travel and Tourism](#) (AsiaTradeCenter.org).

[Here's How Tour Companies Are Pivoting Their Businesses During The Coronavirus Pandemic](#) (Forbes).

[Looking to, guided vacation company. Trafalgar pivots to new pandemic normal to spur bookings](#) (CNBC).



Strategize your next moves.



How to prioritize your time and money.

	Competitive Edge/ Positioning	Organic Social Media	SEO	Local Marketing	Social Campaigns	Google Ads Campaigns	Virtual Tours	Partnerships	Email Marketing
Sit	Immediate	Immediate	Great, Secondary Lead-In Tactic	Great, Secondary Lead-In Tactic	Great Lead-In Tactic If Walking Soon	Great Lead-In Tactic If Walking Soon	Great, Secondary Lead-In Tactic	Great Lead-In Tactic If Walking Soon	Great Lead-In Tactic If Walking Soon
Walk	Immediate	Immediate	Great, Tertiary Tactic	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate	Great, Tertiary Tactic	Immediate	Immediate
Run	Immediate	Immediate	Great, Tertiary Tactic	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate	Great, Tertiary Tactic	Immediate	Immediate



NEXT STEPS

It's easy to get lost in this rapidly evolving world of Coronavirus period tourism marketing. All of us are feeling the stretch and the constant need to catch up.

Just remember to keep a calm outlook, make decisions based on data and evident opportunity, and do not be afraid to get creative!

Most importantly, remember that just because a new tactic works for another tourism brand, it may not work for yours. Do your homework, take ownership, and remember to always keep your plan fluid in some way.

HELPFUL LINKS & RESOURCES

CDC Social Media Toolkit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/social-media-toolkit.html>

Resources from the US Tour Operators Association: <https://ustoa.com/covid19>

Tourism Strong: <https://tourismstrong.com/>

ADARA Travel Trends Tracker:
<https://adara.com/traveler-trends-tracker/>

<https://www-thinkwithgoogle-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/coronavirus-impact-on-travel/amp/>

MMGY's Travel Intentions Pulse Survey (Tips):
<https://www.mmgyintel.com/travel-intentions-pulse-survey-tips-impact-covid-19>

Latest research from Tourism Economics:
<https://www.tourismeconomics.com/>

"10 things DMOs need to consider in their destination marketing recovery strategy":
<https://www.smgonline.net/post/10-things-dmos-need-to-consider-in-their-destination-marketing-recovery-strategy>

"'Safe' Becomes Rural Tourism Pitch to a Distancing Public": <https://www.wsj.com/amp/articles/safe-becomes-rural-tourism-pitch-to-a-distancing-public-11588628901>

Knowland's Blogs and Guidelines for Hotels:
<https://www.knowland.com/resources/covid-19-hotel-resources/>

'Respond, reset, restart... recover?' Tourism marketers map out reopening campaigns:
<https://www.thedrum.com/news/2020/07/01/respond-reset-restart-recover-tourism-marketers-map-out-reopening-campaigns>

Constant Contact's 'Must-Dos for Travel and Tourism Industry Professionals During COVID-19':
<https://blogs.constantcontact.com/travel-and-tourism-marketing-during-covid-19/>

Phocuswire's "How tourism marketers can boost content visibility":
<https://www.phocuswire.com/tourism-marketers-content-visibility-coronavirus>

THANK YOU!

Questions? Comments? Let us know.



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