

How to respond to COVID-19 in the tourism sector

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The global COVID-19 pandemic is still having a major impact on international trade and travel. Small and medium-sized enterprises in the tourism industry are among the most affected. This study provides you with a guide to help you take the necessary actions to ensure the survival of your business and prepare for the future recovery of the tourism market.

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1. Learning goal

This study shows you how to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in the tourism sector, using a number of steps and actions that are essential for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in tourism.

The previous report from 2020 was very much in a chronological order, and was meant to be implemented as such with adjustments to suit localised timelines of events to do with the virus and national government actions or orders. However, assuming that you took action, this update allows more flexibility, but the content still needs to be researched and actioned with a high degree of urgency, due to the fluidity of the situation globally with source markets and destinations.

As two caveats to this report:

1. Travel restrictions are constantly fluctuating due to vaccination programmes in your potential source markets as well as in your own destination. Each country has its own regulations, which can be changed at any time, so this update report is written with the knowledge at the time of writing, but also with the understanding that things can change.
2. As the world settles into another year of disruption by Covid-19, there are signs that some governments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are now offering some support mechanisms / investment assistance with projects to support their own national strategies with the virus. This particularly applies to Labour Law, where readers may now have government assistance with this regarding job retention.

The actions provided are from actual experience of dealing with events that have directly impacted the businesses of the author in the tourism industry over the last 30+ years. Nothing has had such a global impact as Covid-19, including the subsequent economic impact, but direct lessons have been learnt before and along with tourism peers around the world, these are the base line actions that you need to take, if not have already taken with your business. There will be differences in opinion from around the world, but you have to keep an open mind to the challenges and actions, as well as trends circulating and focus on what can work for you, and what is best for your business model, your community and/or your destination.

Tips:

Alongside the suggested actions in this study, read our market information factsheet [on trends](#) and our [news article on the effect of Covid-19](#), for a full understanding of the topic.

Check out the example of [Prospero Zambia](#), which is an NGO that offers support mechanisms and investment assistance to SMEs in Zambia. Search for similar organisations in your home country.

2. Ongoing Actions - “You’ve cut your overheads, now what?”

2.1 Immediate steps with overheads

All tourism stakeholders around the world have suffered an extremely difficult period during the last 18 months, and SMEs in particular have had the brunt of the sudden stop in business. It has been a time of shaving overheads to the lowest amount while keeping their business afloat. The next steps will be a careful balance to keep going and to plan for the future.

“Cash is King”

So, if you took the actions that were suggested in the original report from last year, you should have cut overheads right down using the suggestions, but you still need to save money and also invest in your business over the coming months, so the following actions are still relevant. The easiest cut is again in staff, but that is dealt with separately. Every working practice and business expense still needs to be looked at, renegotiated or stopped, and these include but are not limited to:

- Business rates paid to local or national authorities: Check if there are any new schemes that you can use: rent rebates/business rent deferrals, etc. These may have been implemented but not published, as it is your responsibility to check!
- Rents paid to landlords for premises: If necessary, ask for a payment break or deferral. Some private but corporate landlords around the world are apparently looking at reductions/payment gaps to maintain rental incomes in the mid to long term. If they lose you, could it be harder to get the space filled up again? It costs nothing to ask the question.

Online Presence

As the world returns to some degree of normality over the coming months and years, your website and online social media will be of paramount importance. If you have not done so already, it is strongly suggested that you:

- Review what your website does and what strategy you have for promotional activity – website and social media.
- Search for locally provided or online education on website construction and social media strategies – make sure these are credible resources and that you stick to them if you have chosen them.
- Revise your online strategy and develop the “personas” of your clients so that you can market to them using social media. For further information, see the proposed [marketing changes in section 3](#).

Tip:

Use the tips and suggested actions in our study [How to be a successful tourism company online](#) and the [related webinar](#) to optimise your website and social media performance.

Renegotiate everything

During crises, the 20 biggest expenses need to be reviewed and if at all possible, “renegotiated”. For example, a high street landlord/office rental may give a “rent holiday”, rather than losing a tenant they probably can’t replace in the short term. The same applies to equipment rental and all third-party contracts. It may even be time to negotiate a delay in payment of rates to your local councils. Just remember having something is better than nothing to most suppliers, when they are unlikely to be able to resale the assets you are using.

For example, some operators have come together in international sectors as associations or regional clusters. They have then negotiated fuel costs for a group in a specific area, agreeing to all use the same supplier.

Manage cash brutally

In the last study, it was mentioned to plan for various scenarios for forward trading and for the cash flow accordingly. This time has passed and now tourism stakeholders are looking at gradual returns of the tourism markets, but this will still not realistically take hold until 2022, and so it is still a case of managing any cash you have to cover the existing operating costs, but also now the planning for investment in the future with marketing plans, predominantly online.

2.2 Staff

Obviously circumstances and regulations will have impacted and forced you to make the changes that were beyond the recommendations of the first study produced in 2020. If you have been able to generate any revenue in domestic, or where applicable regional tourism markets over the last year, then the impact on staff may have been reduced, but as the months go on, you will need to reassess who and what you need in a possible negative way, but also, depending on your current circumstances, in a positive way – Hiring!

It was said previously that it’s important to keep key staff so you can expand again once the crisis recedes and to manage the business through tough times. If you have managed to do this, make sure that even when business starts to move forward, that they understand that it is still early days. So with cash resources and Covid-19 allowing, keep following the suggestions of last year for now:

- Moving to a 2-4-day week and giving key staff extra days off work greatly softens the possible 20-50+% wage cut you need them to take. This is not going to be easy, so openly discuss things with them. A tourism SME cannot afford to be generous by keeping things normal and having 50% work/wages is better for them than 0%.
- If you have regional staff, setting up full homeworking capabilities by video conferencing is also a must. This will save on travel costs and time. Many of you do this with customers and tourism partners, and it may only affect a minority, but day-to-day business can be done this way.

Redundancy / Retrenchment

This is an automatic reaction, which is why I had previously suggested that, where possible, you should reduce hours first. In many cases reported over the last year, foreign staff/expats of other nations may have left to go “home”, which may have been beneficial or have had a negative aspect by causing other problems, but you still have to be careful with your staff. Previously with other situations, when companies have retrenched staff and as they get domestic bookings, etc. and trade starts to improve, they have been unable to get them back and have had to hire lower-grade people and start training them again. So the tip for you is to plan and be careful, especially as tourism starts to return, that you make well-considered choices regarding finances and staff abilities.

2.3 Revised Terms & Conditions - cancellation policy

Although you are required by law to offer refunds in some of your potential source markets, many national tourism associations and governments in your source markets have issued a statement that is in your favour, which is to travel later and offer a “credit note”. This is to save their own outbound tourism companies: they are

not thinking of you, but it does mean that you can offer revised conditions to both direct bookings and to any business partners overseas.

Please note that each source country of tourists has different consumer laws protecting those paying for their holiday/vacation, so you should, where possible, investigate these differences per source market. You should also take note of the Package Travel Regulations as described in [this CBI study](#).

There can be no “blanket” wording for all small tourism business around the world, but you should at least change your standard terms and conditions to reflect the current situation around the world and try and keep your future customers as much as possible. You will have to refund some, and if they have a correct reason, try and do this immediately, as no one can afford bad publicity on the internet at times like this.

Here are some examples of what some large tour operators are doing on a UK or global basis:

- KUONI Flex (UK), a flexible approach in response to the Covid-19 crises: [Total peace of mind isn't standard... But neither are we. \(kuoni.co.uk\)](#)
- Explore's (UK) conditions for their Discovery & Wildlife, Cycling, Walking and Family trips: [Booking conditions | Essential Information - Explore](#)
- G Adventure's Inc. from Barbados their [Booking Terms And Conditions - G Adventures - G Adventures](#)

If you can afford to do it, roll out the extension period until the end of March 2022 if not further.

2.4 Government or commercial assistance

Always keep looking to secure/investigate any government-backed loan or grant possible, but don't spend it unless you absolutely have to, even if it is zero interest. If there are grants available through commercial banks, business support organisations or donor organisations, make sure you look at these and read the conditions. If you can apply for these grants, this money could give you a route to a new market, using a new product.

However, always be careful of loans, as although they may give you a lifeline, you will still have to repay them in the future. They are often for a specific purpose, such as paying wages as rebates from a social security fund, so be careful that you use any money wisely and adhere to the conditions of the loans.

2.5. Marketing & Advertising expenditure

Hopefully you will have cut back on marketing investments for the majority of last year, with possibly the main focus being on domestic or some regional tourism marketing through social media and/or keeping in touch with your existing customers.

In addition, remove reasons not to book. Customers will obviously be worried about the booking process at the moment, in case they need to cancel their holiday because of the pandemic. Make sure they have full travel insurance that covers any circumstances relating to Covid-19 for this purpose as well, especially if they are booking directly. Revise your terms and conditions and tell them. If your destination has rules and regulations about entry, such as requiring full vaccination or PCR tests, tell them in advance. Communication is going to be key to maintain business relationships with overseas tour operators as well direct bookings. You must have open communication with everyone, reply to questions as quickly as you would normally, and also keep them updated as to what is happening in your country or destination. Keep them informed, as they do not know much other than what they think is correct or what they get from the media!

Covid-19 case study: Ntanda Ventures (Zambia)

As with all countries around the world, Zambia was hit hard by Covid-19, and these are a few steps that this SME tour operator took to mitigate some of the effects and to keep moving forward within the company. The company is based in the northwest of the country, and not in a traditional tourism hotspot.

- First, they promoted and facilitated a repatriation service for Zambians overseas and for Expats living in Zambia to support their documentation and flights home, based on commissions and service fees. This provided intensive work, but also a good level of income now that the international tourists had stopped coming.
- They took most of the actions that were recommended in the previous study and cut costs and then looked at the specific domestic market that remained, but was in its infancy.
- They renovated a farm cottage nearby to offer local people an escape from the town. This has not brought in huge incomes, but has opened up a local Chimpanzee Sanctuary to more local tourism, and also allows people to use it as a base to visit the source of the Zambezi. A great marketing/branding result in the domestic market.
- They set up a new website dedicated to domestic tourism, which has brought consistent business with self-drive holidays as well as fully organised tours across Zambia for Zambians, as well as now providing a service for lodges as a booking centre.
- They have spent 2021 pushing ahead with digital programmes (supported by the CBI), focusing on their international website and social media, which has broadened their appeal, and enquiries are now starting to come back in for 2021 and 2022.
- To develop their products they offer to all tourists, they also embarked on a range of product development initiatives, which has taken the whole team right across Zambia, looking at new supplier options, accommodation options, tour ideas and contracting for the future. This was to refresh and offer more of their destination, much of which is largely untouched by any mass tourism of any kind.

The five women team headed up by Kerry Macfarlane has constantly looked at what they can do and looked for guidance amongst the studies and reports that the CBI and others have produced and has successfully shown that it is possible to maintain and in many ways grow a business during the pandemic.

Kerry Macfarlane:



3. What to do next?

For most of your businesses, you will have been in lockdown or in a state of no clients for over one year by now. There will obviously be differences depending on where you are in the world, but also if you have successfully developed a domestic or regional tourism income stream and by possible diversification with your business.

3.1. Marketing

If you check out [Google Trends](#) and other data-driven social media options, you will find that there are searches for holidays/vacations in most sectors of the markets.

Inspire potential customers

People are still looking for Inspiration, and as such many companies have been focusing on their websites and social media pages and posting inspirational pictures, videos and messages, and all SMEs should continue to do so in the immediate future. Good examples are [Nekatours](#) (Zambia), [Ntanda Ventures](#) (Zambia) on social media, [Overland Ireland Tours](#) (Ireland) on the web, and the videos of [BBC Nature](#) on YouTube.

Although people are still looking for inspiration, they are now looking to see how much it will cost them. The idea is to lock people into your web page and then draw their attention so that they start to discuss the pictures or articles that you have posted on your website and social media, therefore triggering a potential enquiry based upon a price – “Can I afford this?”. So ensure that you communicate well with them, almost think of yourself as a new start up again! Like with [product development](#), you need to understand what the client is looking for and encourage them to go on a journey with you. To help them, make sure you inform them of the options for flying from their location to you – direct or indirect flight options. You may not handle the flight booking, but you can advise them on the options and the possible best route for them.

Create a marketing plan

Plan this “marketing” by putting together a short- to mid-term plan for the remainder of 2021 and advance plans for what you are going to do in 2022 when the main source markets will start to travel more frequently. This could mean budgeting for a paid-for social media plan, but at the very least actions as mentioned above and an email campaign/newsletter to your existing direct and business customers. Communicate what is happening even in the lockdown in your country. If you have an Export Marketing Plan, then focus on the part of this that you planned to do before the pandemic; what parts can you do now, does your website need updating that you can do yourself, etc.

Tip:

Use the CBI study [How to forecast tourism demand with Google Trends & Data Studio](#) to learn the basics of how to make this software work for you. In this study, you will also find multiple ready-made templates that can serve as examples, as well as two instructional videos that will teach you how to create your own.

Figure 1: An example from Ntanda Ventures’ branding from Zambia



Source: Ntanda Ventures

3.2 Product development

During these past 18 months, in which Covid-19 really hit the tourism industry, it would have been and still is an ideal opportunity to re-think the products and services that you are currently offering. In a “normal” period, you would be able to survey customers that you have and get feedback from them and then be able to build profiles of what your clients like or do not like, but in the current times, you have no clients or at least very few, and so a slightly different approach will be needed. There are many ways of looking at this, but here are a few simple pointers for you to be able to adapt.

Cut the number of Suppliers you use

In times of reduced demand, it is important to cut the number of suppliers you have and to work more closely with a smaller number, with whom you can negotiate better payment terms or trading terms in the future. The more fixed assets (such as vehicles, their own accommodation, overseas sales offices) a level of the travel chain has, the more they will be feeling the pain. For example, hoteliers will be desperate to fill rooms and will/should offer lower rates and/or higher commissions. Make sure your business benefits, and make sure your terms and conditions regarding cancellation are part of this.

The larger, regional/major chains will be doing their own things, so maybe this is the time to strengthen the relationships with the partners you can work with for a sustainable future. Develop a meaningful commercial relationship for the future, instead of spreading your business too thin by working with too many suppliers.

Review what you have sold before and why

It is common for many companies to sell their product or service in a way that has not changed in a long time:

“that’s the way we have always done it”. Now is the time to look at the trends and style of things you can offer. With demand that will keep increasing for community engagement and sustainable tourism, you have to do more than say you do it. Build your programmes around these critical and important facets to the tourism experience. The CBI has constantly invested heavily into providing information for tourism SMEs throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. These reports and articles will be the [basis of your development](#).

Working together?

This is also an ideal time to survey your destination and think seriously about working with other SMEs in your tourism industry. These could be accommodation suppliers, local or regional tour operators in another part of your destination, or someone else that provides an interesting experience that you can include. One thing is certain, and that is that people are looking for far more experiential tourism features in their holidays, and the global lockdowns will drive that further.

As SMEs, you can and should be far more adept at delivering specialist experiences. By working together, you can match the larger national or regional tourism players and go to markets with new and exciting ideas and packages. Some can even be reworked “old” ones with a new and exciting twist. This is going to be paramount as trends evolve as a result of the pandemic.

3.3. Preparation for the future.

Having looked at immediate actions and then the next steps, make a checklist to ensure that you have done everything. This is very important, especially your website and social media content, which provides inspiration for now, as well as your planning for future marketing. One thing that COVID-19 has done is level the industry out, so it is now that SMEs can show their true value in the industry and build themselves up for the future.

Yes, it is going to be hard, but if you plan and keep at it, you have an equal opportunity. Remember, larger companies have higher overheads, whereas small companies can be nimble and move fast if they see opportunities.

Tips:

Make that checklist of actions, go through it and engage your whole team. DO NOT LEAVE IT – it will be so easy to slow down and let things stop!

Keep in touch with your national and/or regional tourism associations, tourism boards and other stakeholders. They may well be looking at stimulus programmes for tourism or economic assistance, which you could benefit from in the mid to long term.

Look at your products and how you can make them better. Are you leaving too many opportunities for potential clients to only buy one thing from you when you could be offering more? This applies to both tour operators in destinations (national/regional/local) and accommodation suppliers. Read our studies about [trends on the European outbound tourism market](#) and [product development](#) to focus your efforts.

4. The Future - What or where is your market now and in the mid term?

Remember that Covid-19 will dissipate and become less deadly, but it will not disappear.

However, it is clear from pre-coronavirus research and cross sector analysis (tourism and no tourism) that the following will apply, and so you need to make sure you are including this with anything you now do. Your options

will of course depend on your situation, but always think about the possibilities.

4.1 Rebounds/Trends in tourism

It is becoming increasingly clear that, certainly for the international markets, there are far more factors that have to be considered, and that there will be a longer period of recovery. The following table includes some of the factors that will have a direct effect on tourism as a consequence of the global pandemic.

What health checks will be needed in your country that are accepted internationally and in the source market country (will they need extra checks to re-enter their own country?)
What airlines will be operating after this to your destination and from where?
What prices will the airlines be charging?
Will your country require any extra entry requirements - health certificate, medical tests?
Has your own destination or country had any major changes in accessibility - airlines, etc.?

In 2020, it was thought that there could be a V-shaped rebound, but as indicated last year in the first of these reports, some countries were already thinking of closing down for a significant period of time. Some, such as Australia, are effectively closed until 2022, which may be under constant review, as are New Zealand and some Asian locations. As stated in the last Covid-19 update, "some make predictions on what they want to happen and not what actually is/will be happening", and so you have to keep on top of the trends, but also make sure you do your own research if it makes sense or is practical for your destination. For now, in mid-2021, things are becoming clearer, and so everyone has to start taking action, especially regarding planning for the international market's staged return. But take note of the trends and how they can fit your product/marketing/destination.

4.2 Domestic Tourism - Has this worked!

No matter if you are involved with any domestic tourism or not, you have to look at this, as this will be your first stage opportunity to get your business back on track. Many countries around the world do not have a domestic tourism market. However, this is going to be something that you can stimulate on a small scale moving upwards, and it's going to be about working with selective partners on packaging, price and marketing.

This is more than accommodation suppliers offering a deal for local people from another area to stay with them. This is also for the tour companies to look at their options, even if they have never done any domestic tourism beforehand. Think about what you can do to offer people a package that they have not seen before - give them a reason to buy!

Follow these short tips and at least investigate the ideas and options, as this could bring in badly needed revenue.

Tips:

Try and include a minimum of three different components in the package that is sold as one inclusive price. Think of components such as transport, accommodation and excursions.

Negotiate hard with your suppliers on this. After all, they are in the same place as you!

Look at how you price the package: is it based on individuals or groups?

Think about how you are going to market the package. Maybe look at affinity groups (people with a common interest) and include a component that fulfils that, such as cooking classes, dancing or cultural experiences.

Be aware that domestic tourism could be inbound from a region to the capital or where you are based, or outbound from where you are.

For many, the domestic markets have been a difficult target audience, but what has come through is that they have been able to test any new product ideas, and with some adaptation, these can now be used for the regional and international source markets as they return to travelling to your respective destinations.

4.3 Regional Tourism - The domestic follower

After the domestic revival, the next step will be regional tourism. Part of your recovery plan will need to be adapting what you have done before, plus potentially new things you have learnt from the domestic tourism process. Regional tourism will have a quicker return than international travel, because people feel more comfortable with their neighbours.

Look at what you have done before: will it work again? Your regional business clients may still be a little cautious, so make sure you are communicating what they can or cannot do. Of course this will also depend on them being able to access your destination. Regional airlines may not restart as much as international routes. Do your research, but make sure you are getting ahead, even if you have not done any regional business for some time or ever before.

4.4 Family Travel

Family travel will boom. The decision makers will be the kids! Focus your activities and food menus around the “decision makers”, as well as your regular adult clients. As a result of multiple lockdowns, many families are rediscovering themselves, and so a decision to go to your destination will be based on many factors. But the children will have a greater say than before. At the same time, you need to think about the health and safety aspects of families. What are the parents going to be expecting?

4.5 Activity and Experiential Holidays

Activity and experiential holidays will be vital, which is why you should “inspire” people on your social media channels. Many “experts” are stating that the new traveller will be looking for adventure/activity, but are you actually already in that segment of the market? If not, how could you be?

Remember that the word activity can be used in many ways, and it is not just about physical activity. It could be just doing something that a person has an affinity to, such as painting or bird watching, as much as activities like cycling or river rafting. For experiential travel, it is all about the engagement with communities, nature, and culture, which provides people with an experience that bonds them to your destination. “Making it real” was a popular saying a few years ago, but with the current global lockdowns, it is becoming more relevant as people start to move to experiencing more from their holidays.

Figure 2: Real experiences count more than ever



Source: Photo by Manual Will

4.6 Sustainable travel and tourism

Sustainable travel/tourism and care for the environment will see record volume growth, as the travelling public now 'get it' after the effects of a virus that stopped the world in its tracks. It is time to look at your operations and see how you do things, such as your working practices, vehicles, offices and accommodation. You need to be able to prove it, not just say it!

People will be looking for more sustainable options when making their choice. This applies to both tour operations and accommodation suppliers, in fact the whole tourism value chain. CBI is heavily involved with the focus of sustainable tourism, and works closely with many organisations to bring this to our programmes. This is driven both by consumer demand and by SMEs around the world that believe in sustainability and work in a responsible way.

Tip:

Check out our articles about the [growth of Sustainable travel and Tourism](#) and [improving the welfare of animals in tourism](#) for more insights. Sustainability applies very significantly to the wildlife aspect when selling destinations, more information can specifically be found in our new study titled [the opportunities on the European wildlife tourism market](#).

4.7 Overseas travel agents/tour operators

Overseas travel agents/tour operators have seen huge business declines in their business volumes during Covid-19, as travel and tourism stopped for a long period. Potential travellers will continue to D-I-Y package things digitally, as they are becoming increasingly computer proficient and savvy surfers. However, they are also under pressure to have protection for their money, which is why the European Package Travel Regulations are so strong and national associations and governments are pushing to book with their travel agents and tour operators that are licensed and provide financial protection. So where does that leave you? At this time, you need to show your strengths and understanding of their fears as well as highlighting yourselves. However, with this comes the requirement of working to align yourself with the European Package Travel regulations 2018. This is a pan-European regulation that includes the UK, which is in place to protect the end consumer. How you can work with this regulation is provided in a CBI factsheet titled [“the European Package Travel Directive”](#).

4.8. Technology

Video conferencing and webinars will increase after the lockdown as more people have used this method to keep in touch among themselves and when working from home, but face-to-face meetings and conferences along with trade shows and congresses will survive. We are human and we like human interaction, especially in the tourism business, but this will not really start until late 2021. There will possibly be events/shows from September onwards, but these are not guaranteed for many reasons. In the meantime, try and have the calls/video meetings with overseas clients. You could also record your own YouTube videos or webinars and look at using these on your social media platforms, etc., to again “Inspire” people.

There have been some successful virtual tours that have been developed, but that is dependent on you having the facilities for recording, editing and producing “virtual safaris” or city tours for example. [One facility is Google Tour Creator](#)

The other option is that you use any “virtual tours” that your national tourism organisation is using to promote your destination. If you can use this on your own website or social media and even add a sub brand, this will also be a good promotional tool to inspire people.

Again, it is very important that your websites and social media are working to your very best advantage, and so try and review or compare yours with other companies both locally and overseas. If you are not sure, look into local courses/online courses as previously suggested for guidance on your own practices. Digital is going to play an increasing and more sophisticated role to promoting your products/company and destination.

Technology and payments will be more and more linked as the whole industry and travellers expectations move towards a contactless experience, especially with payments, accommodation and travel generally. This may be an easy matter to research and undertake where you are based, but in the global scheme of things, many countries have a long way to go with technology available, banking regulations and also, dare I say it, business practices that are stuck in the decades before digital payment processes. You will have to adapt and also possibly lobby your government’s financial ombudsmen/banking regulators to make changes in the very short-term future.

Tips:

Check out some good examples on how to make use of videos on YouTube, social media or your webpage from [The Galapagos - Vlog](#), [Welcome to Jordan](#) and [Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe](#).

See [Wild Earth’s SafariLIVE](#), [Asilia’s Safari at Home](#) and [Jordan360](#) for good examples of virtual tours.

Make use of new technologies in payments. More and more online payment methods are becoming available that you can link to your websites to ease payment processes from direct clients, plus the possibility for the overseas tour operators to possibly use them. Check what is possible in your destination or what international processes you can use. But make sure that it will work for your

clients – it's no good having a system that doesn't work for them!

4.9 Other Trends - a summary of those currently being used.

This list and explanations is a summary of the most commonly discussed/mentioned trends. Some are an evolution of pre-existing trends that with Covid-19 have been pushed more to the front of people's minds when thinking about travel/holidays/vacations, etc.

Sustainability/Responsible Tourism

During the past 18 months, sustainability and responsibility with people's actions have been highlighted as people look at what or how they do things both in their everyday life and with regard to their future travel plans.

There is a lot of information available in your region of the world and you can all start to take steps towards making yourself sustainable, but here is some reference material for you to check as a start:

- [The Travel Foundation](#) (UK) works for a world where tourism brings greater benefits for people and the environment in destinations. Their website includes lots of useful resources.
- [Tourism Declares](#) a climate emergency is a global community of 300 organisations, companies and professionals working together to plan a better future for tourism.
- [Global Sustainable Tourism Council](#) for global criteria, standards and certifications.
- [The Future of Tourism](#) is a movement that places destination needs at the centre of tourism's new future.
- [Responsible Tourism Partnership](#) focuses on how sustainable development can benefit communities and destinations.

There are plenty more, and so check what your destination has to offer! Is your tourism board (national or regional) aligning with a certification programme or can you do this on your own?

Health and wellness

This is a two part element as people are looking at the status of the destination regarding Covid-19 and your health protocol as a destination, and importantly, as a company. This information should be very evident and clear on your website so that people can feel reassured before they make a buying choice. This is also very much relevant to working with international tour operators as they need to be reassured and provided with all the information so that they can be confident on behalf of their customers. The other element of the [Health and Wellness trend](#) is that personal wellness has very much become a focus for people over the last 18 months, and so any element you can focus on to provide that will be to your advantage. For more information, please see [this article on the medical travel market](#) as a guide line.

Slow Travel

This is where minimal air travel is used, particularly for domestic routes. It allows people to engage more with the people, culture and destination as a whole. More details can be found in [this blog post](#) on the Sustainable Brands community's website.

Indulgent Travel

This, along with "Revenge" Travel, seems to be focused on the more affluent travellers who, having been greatly restricted over the last 18 months, are looking to splash out on indulgent luxury trips. This will be very relevant to some, but this is nothing new and I personally believe you should focus on other trends more, unless of course you are a [five-star/high net worth product/service](#).

Digital Nomads/Workcations

More and more countries are looking to the potential of special visas for extended stays for the people that have found they can work and travel for extended periods. Particularly with “workcations”, the independent executive or worker that has no family or work commitments is already looking at service factors for a better work life balance instead of the rushed 7/10/14 day trip and barely any time to switch off in the middle. Therefore, if you can cater to this type of person with their strong internet desire, there may be a trend you can follow and offer relevant products.

Figure 2: Digital nomads can work from anywhere



Source: Photo by [Peggy Anke](#) on [Unsplash](#)

4.10 Training

What has grown over the last 12 months are the number of training opportunities that are now available. These cover operational, HR and personnel, online and offline marketing and various other skill sets that small businesses need, especially as you “manage” your way back on track post Covid-19. Many of you may not have had specific formal training before, or for some it is a case of being reminded of what you already knew from before but with a fresh approach. It really doesn’t matter if you look at a long-term course with a certification at the end of it, or attend a masterclass for a few hours, like the CBI has done many times before and will do in the future – it’s all education, and even seasoned professionals will always pick up new ideas or ways of doing things.

For suggestions you could start with:

- The CBI – [Tourism related](#) webinars, workshops and trainings.
- The [UNWTO Tourism Academy](#)

- [The Travel Foundation - Free training programmes](#)

There will be many other NGO/Development agency training programmes available over the coming months, some being country specific, while others will be open to anyone from the industry.

There will also be those that you pay for, but have a look at the subjects and who is delivering the training - is it worth the investment to gain an upward step for your business or you as an individual?

A search on the internet will provide you with courses that are coming out of all parts of the world, so check them out and look at the extra value and knowledge they will bring.

This study has been carried out on behalf of CBI by Clive Bishop of [Blue Skies Consultancy Group](#).

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