

# Tiqets

More ways to culture

## **The Immediate Future of Tourism: Strategies for Recovering Strong This Summer**



## A moment of opportunity

“For the last 16 months, even our biggest clients haven’t been going anywhere.” With this sentence, Lonely Planet Vice President Tom Hall summed up much of the tourism industry’s experience over the last year: uncertain. Between March 2020 and March 2021, destinations around the world welcomed 180 million fewer arrivals and the industry took an unprecedented knock. The future of tourism looked grim.

But, many people in the tourism industry, including the team at Lonely Planet, didn’t give up. “Since 2020, one of the all-consuming thoughts at Lonely Planet – and one of the things we’ve been sure of – is that travel will come back. And when it does, we’ve been determined to be ready, “ says Hall. And things are starting to turn around; in the U.S., where vaccination rates are high, air travel is already bouncing back, with three consecutive months of sales growth. So, how can you best turn this tourism rebound into a moment of opportunity?

We checked in with Hall and two more travel professionals to find out what sort of trends they’re seeing as we leave pandemic-era restrictions behind and tourism begins to roar back to life. We discovered that things probably won’t go back to exactly the way they were. They’ll be even better.

In fact, this moment in time is one of real potential for museums and attractions. As you jump back into the fray of offering memorable experiences to travelers near and far, here are six strategies that will spring you into the future of tourism.

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# Meet the Experts



**Tom Hall**

Vice president Lonely Planet



**Stacey Leasca**

Travel Journalist



**Gianluca Camaggio**

Sales Manager Tourism Barcelona

## Trend 1:

### Trust is the new currency of tourism

People are excited to get back to exploring new places, but the experience of the last year has planted health and safety firmly in everyone's minds. With a collective crash course in germ theory, museums and attractions that have mastered sanitation and can demonstrate their efforts to keep visitors healthy now have a distinct advantage. Let's call it trust.

Stacey Leasca, a travel journalist who works with industry-leading publications such as Travel & Leisure, Departures, Trip Advisor, and Expedia, has noticed readers seeking extra reassurance about the safety of travel right now. They want to be confident that their travel adventure won't turn out to be too risky, which highlights a need to coax people back into travel by presenting experiences as trustworthy.

Hall backs this up with his perspective at Lonely Planet, a travel publication that's nearing its 50th year and has an ethos of story-worthy travel experiences that connect people to the world: "Being 'safe' in travel means something different now than what it meant in 2019. Trust is a hugely important currency, and the theme of trust – 'traveling when you're ready' – is really important right now in messaging."

“ There's an inkling for comfort travel – going to familiar destinations and classic places, and taking less risks back into destinations.”

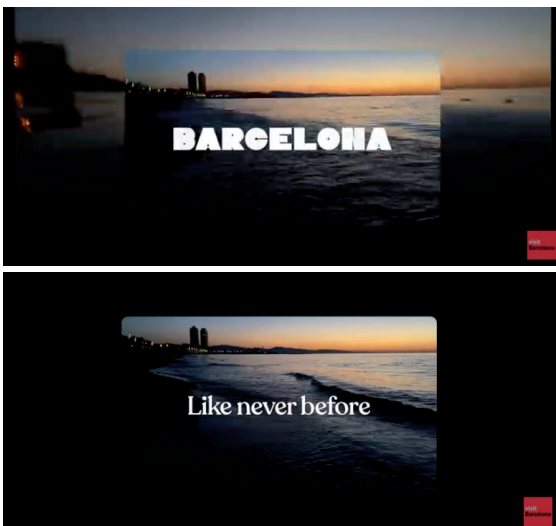
- Tom Hall, Vice President at Lonely Planet

#### The strategy:

Emphasize the trustworthiness of your venue and experience in all your messaging: be explicit in your messages about COVID safety and social distancing, and ensure your marketing channels safety and serenity in a world of chaos. When promoting your reopening, show and explain to potential visitors what safety measures you have in place to reassure them it's safe to visit.

## Trend 2: Domestic tourism is going to be a major focus

It probably goes without saying that domestic visitors are a huge focus for a lot of attractions right now. With international travel still lagging, and countries at different points in their vaccination programs, a lot of museums and attractions are hoping to take advantage of domestic and local visitors. In fact, according to Gianluca Camaggio, Sales Manager for Tourism Barcelona, as of early May, two out of three tourists staying in the city's hotels were from the city or nearby.



A lot of people are more inclined to look close to home for their first-back adventures, but appealing to a local audience is different from attracting travelers. Camaggio's team has a new ad campaign: "Barcelona like never before." It features all of the big local attractions which make Barcelona great – but seen in a new light.

“ There's not a thin line between visitors and locals. There's a huge line between them. It's a challenge for a destination to attract those people that don't want to feel like tourists. You have to shift the way you communicate with them.”

- Gianluca Camaggio, Sales Manager, Tourism Barcelona

### The strategy:

This is the time to revisit your marketing angle. Local visitors want to discover what's on their own doorstep, but from a different perspective. Close the gap between travelers and locals by experimenting with different ways to present a place, as Tourism Barcelona did with their campaign, which highlights the culture of Barcelona rather than focusing on traditional attractions.

## Trend 3:

# What makes you unique is what makes you great

People are eager for new experiences, and smaller, more out-of-the-way attractions have an advantage in the future of tourism. Leasca recommends that attractions “market the thing that nobody else has. Sometimes smaller venues and destinations are that quirky, fun, interesting thing – this is particularly important when reaching out to journalists and sharing on social media.”

Bigger, more well-known venues and cities themselves are not exempt from this angle. They can leverage what makes them iconic, a key way to capture the attention of travelers thinking about a trip, but are not sure where to go. Think the Empire State Building in New York or the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, destinations that are one of a kind and practically define their cities.

“ The off-the-beaten-path, hidden gems really got the benefit of the last year. It’s helped them to be positioned on the same level as bigger, more well-known venues.”

- Gianluca Camaggio, Sales Manager, Tourism Barcelona



### The strategy:

All three of our experts emphasized the importance of leveraging what’s iconic or special about your particular venue. Whether your venue is a well-known urban symbol or an off-the-beaten-path hidden gem, dial in on what makes you unique and put it front and center in all your marketing.

## Trend 4:

# Values matter now more than ever

Environmental values, social values, and even political values are as important in the travel and tourism business as they are anywhere else. Hall says, “At Lonely Planet, we’re very focused on the fact that many of the trends that were important to our audience have only accelerated as concerns when planning a trip – sustainability, community, inclusivity – all rooted in the desire to travel in a responsible fashion and put time and money into places sharing these values.”

Fashion for Good, a Dutch museum dedicated to sustainable fashion innovation, does a great job of promoting its value-based mission on its website and in all its marketing materials. Visitors inclined to put their tourism dollars where their values are come to the museum to learn where their clothes come from and learn how to shop sustainably.

A venue’s commitment to diversity and inclusion is also now expected. People expect to see themselves represented and spoken to both within the event itself and in the marketing. For anyone who thinks this is all about being “politically correct,” Leasca has a warning: “Not only is it very important for us as a society to make sure that we’re representing the people who travel, it’s also a financial decision that is incredibly important for destinations. For instance, Black American travelers represent more than 13% of U.S. leisure travel, which is several billion dollars a year.”

As Leasca notes, another important element to diversity in travel is accessibility, a wildly underserved market. She says, “Billions and billions and billions of dollars a year are not getting to destinations because they lack accessibility to people who are traveling with disabilities, for instance, in a wheelchair.”

“Not only is it important for society; it’s a financial decision destinations cannot ignore.”

- Stacey Leasca, travel journalist

## The strategy:

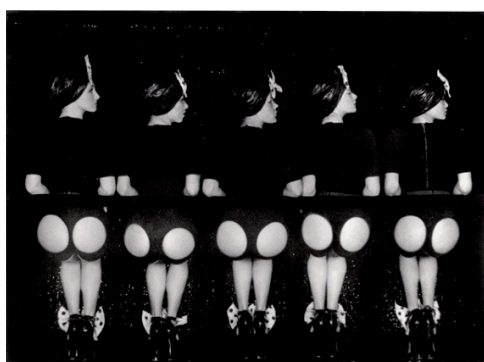
If you're ignoring any segment of the population in your marketing, or alienating them with the actual experience, you're missing both an opportunity and a responsibility. But don't assume you have all the answers. Partnering with others who can help is a fundamental part of that journey. Lonely Planet, for instance, has worked with the Black Travel Alliance. Hall recommends "actively listening as a very, very important part of it."

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## Trend 5: Open communication is a must

So far, we've learned that four things are going to be important in the future of tourism: trust, domestic tourism, what makes an attraction unique, and its values. The fifth trend we uncovered in our sleuthing: communication is a critical aspect to help position all of these things.

First of all, you have to be visibly open for those intrepid "first-back" travelers. Hall says "Word of mouth is that summer is going to be absolutely crucial as people swap stories of where they've been and their experiences on the ground." Destinations have a great opportunity to show people – not just tell them – what to expect when they come to visit, especially in terms of safety and visitor experience. Images of people returning to major attractions around the world will be hugely significant in demonstrating recovery globally.



Social media is typically the best way to reach out to people who are interested – those who are already following you (for a reason) and wider audiences you can access through targeted social advertising. Crazy Horse, the famous Parisian cabaret, survived lockdown by pivoting to live-streamed shows on Instagram. While Crazy Horse plans to re-open this September, in the interim, the cabaret has kept its 120K followers loyal and engaged with a [lively feed](#) of historic photos and ad-hoc modern moments.

Leasca's advice is to pick one channel and excel at it, and that means engaging with your followers. "Forget big, giant follower numbers," she says. "You want people to be able to find your content, like it, comment, and ask you questions." She drives home her point with advice to be vocal and confident on social media: "I don't think it's ever a bad idea to give people too much information about what they can expect."

“ I believe very, very deeply in the importance of social media all the time, but especially as we make our return to travel. Trust and visibility are incredibly important for people right now.”  
- Stacey Leasca, travel journalist

 **The strategy:**

Lean into Instagram Stories, Reels, TikTok, even LinkedIn – which Leasca calls a “huge opportunity people don’t always take advantage of.” Always make sure you’re talking with people, not at them, on social media – for instance, doing live Q&As and taking polls during them; showing people behind the scenes; inviting people to comment about their experiences on your destination photos.



## Trend 6:

# It's time to build on what we've learned about digital

During the pandemic, the Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum in Madrid put its creative talent to use creating exhibitions, courses, talks, activities, and other kinds of experiences for virtual “visitors” around the world. Now that the museum is back open to the public in person, all that creative effort won't go to waste. Instead, the museum continues to offer virtual reality tours from its website.


A sense of celebration suffused with safety heralds a triumphant return to travel this year. But that doesn't mean going back to exactly how things were. After a year spent mastering stopgap digital technology solutions – online booking systems, virtual immersive experiences, sophisticated apps – there's no reason to revert to an entirely analog approach. The various types of technology that venues have acquired over the last year will play a distinct role in the future of tourism.

Camaggio believes this to be true in particular for marketing use: “The innovation of virtual experiences will not go away. They may not be paid experiences, but will act more like promotion, to give potential visitors a taste of the experience.”

Hall traces this technique back to the original principle of trust when he suggests “placing potential visitors in the heart of experiences through images and video before they arrive in a destination.” Now that we know how to create state-of-the-art virtual experiences, it would be foolish not to integrate that know-how into the future.

“ Seizing the moment certainly means destinations presenting themselves as safe and worthy of trust, but it’s also about being innovative via the use of technology – for bookings and information-gathering, for example.”

- Tom Hall, Vice President at Lonely Planet

 **The strategy:**

The Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum has not been the only museum to capitalize on its pandemic-era digital efforts. Think about the technology changes your business has implemented over the last year, and how you can use them as you get back to in-person visits and reach out to greater audiences.



For more innovative ideas for your post-COVID emergence, download the free ebook [Innovative Tourism Strategies to Help Your Venue Recover After COVID-19.](#)

# The one thing you can do today to be ready for tomorrow

We asked our experts for one concise piece of advice they would give those in charge of positioning attractions to first-back travelers.



**Tom Hall**

Vice president Lonely Planet

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“Be open and honest about what it's like on the ground at your destination. Broadcast that information through social channels. And always keep it as up to date as possible.”



**Stacey Leasca**

Travel Journalist

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“Ask your followers what they are hoping to see or do or experience. It's okay to talk with people; you don't need to guess. We have these tools available to ask them directly, and that's very, very powerful.”



**Gianluca Camaggio**

Sales Manager Tourism Barcelona

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“A reset button has been pushed on the tourism industry, and we need to rebuild the relationship with customers. Get out and look at what's happening around you. Once you see how the market is reacting, you'll see what to do. And focus on the trust people need to have.”

# Seizing this moment

“The next 12 months remain an incredible moment for reinventing tourism for all of us.”

- Tom Hall, Vice President at Lonely Planet

In markets where potential travelers feel relatively safe and secure, Hall says, tourism “doesn’t just begin again; it comes roaring back, and it does so in a celebratory way.” Attractions have a great responsibility to send that message of safety and celebration to first-back travelers and tourists.

We’ve all become much more nimble and responsive in the last year-plus. A lot of attractions have upped their digital games and learned how to do more with less money to spend. As travel – particularly domestic travel – picks back up, make you sure make the most of the moment and make your summer comeback.



Want to dive deeper into how to make your summer comeback?  
[Watch our webinar.](#)

# Take advantage of the trends to kickstart your recovery

Now you've got the knowledge for a great summer comeback but do you have the right tech and the right partners to make it happen?

Over the last 18 months Tiqets has helped many of their partners with tricky issues like capacity management, timeslot-based ticketing, and communicating new regulations.

Find out how we tackled these issues, and how we can help you with yours, by getting in touch with the team at Tiqets.

**Get in touch here**

