



Roadmap to Reopening:  
**Travel & Hospitality**

**REQ**



# REQ

The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented times for everyone. There were no guidebooks or historical data to help us navigate the impact it would have on all industries, but especially the hospitality industry. As we plan to reopen to a new sense of normal, we are required to look at things a bit differently. We have compiled a list of recommendations from thought leaders within the digital marketing space. Each vertical and medium of advertising has shifted and, with it, we must also shift our way of thinking and gauging performance.

## OWNED MEDIA

An important first step for a hotel, casino, or hospitality company to take as they reopen is to maintain an updated website with the latest information. Meanwhile, proactive communication via email newsletters can keep your customers and guests informed while staying top of mind.



### WEBSITE

- Notify guests of what your staff is doing related to COVID-19 with a dedicated landing page and FAQs.
- If you do a homepage pop-up, remember this can be penalized by Google in search rankings since you are blocking users who have to click out of the banner. Remember to remove when possible.
- Property or Loyalty Program Apps are becoming more valued as well, to further enhance a mobile strategy.



### EMAIL

- Keep your guests up to date on fun virtual content, updates on property closure and reopening information, and safety protocols.
- Loyalty, tier status, and valid promotions are all important info.



### LOYALTY PROGRAMS

- Rely on your brand advocates and returning guests. They likely want to help support your destination and team just as much as you want them to return!
- Some loyalty programs are extending tier status, so this could be an opportunity to “steal” away other hospitality loyalists to your brand without a punishment in points/status.

## EARNED MEDIA

In addition to your owned channels, ensuring your earned media channels are updated is critical as well. Be sure your business listings are displayed accurately in SERPS and maintain an open dialogue with customers through your blog and social media profiles to keep them engaged and updated with real-time information.



### SEO

- Review your Google My Business listing accuracy to ensure hours, services, and contact information are up to date
- Optimize site for COVID health-related terms if applicable

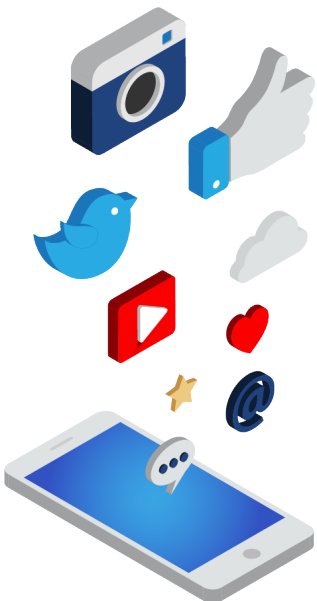
### CONTENT MARKETING

- Publish a landing page and/or blog detailing what is being done from a safety standpoint, including cleaning, sanitizing, and spacing guidelines
  - Support it with visuals such as graphics or video that can also be used for social sharing
- Establish clear cancellation policies
- Create content around how to create an enjoyable experience during the “new normal”, such as:
  - Social distancing activities
  - How to stay healthy during travel



### SOCIAL MEDIA

- Share safety measures for new cleaning, sanitizing, and spacing guidelines
- Make sure your hours are up to date in your bio
- Ensure your customer service team is ready to respond to inquiries and comments
  - Have an escalation process in place to be prepared
- Build excitement and inspire engagement
  - Prior to opening, drum up excitement around your opening date
  - Get your audience involved with posts such fill-in-the-blanks, tagging, and questions, such as:
    - Name your number-one packing essential: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Tag the first person you’re going on a trip with!
    - What will be the first thing you do when you visit?
  - Host contests
  - Involve your audience /audiences with engaging UGC campaigns
    - Ask audience to share favorite memories from the last time they visited
    - Create a hashtag for people to use when when visiting
- Highlight employees and show appreciation for their work
- Use your brand voice to celebrate a return to travel



## PAID MEDIA

Now that you've laid your foundation by ensuring your owned and earned channels are up to date, get your message in front of your target audience with the right paid media tactics. This step is important for creating awareness for both returning and new audiences.

- There is an increased focus on growing the leisure market and getting direct bookings (moving away from OTAs) according to Sojern survey data

Utilize heavy awareness campaigns

- Let the public know you're open and generate early momentum
- Begin rebuilding remarketing audiences

- Targeting past converters should be an effective tactic to employ first, especially if budgets are limited

- Update landing pages to reflect earned media content such as:

- Safety measures being taken
- Cancellation policy
- Social distancing activities



## GUEST SERVICES

The world has changed since people last traveled. Relationships will be more important now than they ever were. Putting a focus on guest service will be important, as we need to take guests' emotions into account. It will take more than discounted rates to get people to remain loyal, venture out, and spend.

- People are inevitably more cautious now - cautious with safety, travel, spending, trust and more.
- To give back to the healthcare workers and first responders putting their lives on the line, offer deals on rooms and services.

- Important aspects to consider before marketing to your guests:

- How has our business model shifted?
- How will we ensure guests and team members are in a safe environment?
- What are the most important values of our brand?
- How will we ensure a positive guest experience?
- How do we build trust with our audience again?
- How do we tell our story in a genuine and meaningful way?
- Are these changes temporary or permanent?



## WHO'S DOING IT RIGHT?

These brands have shown passion, empathy, creativity, and savvy as they have welcomed guests back with open arms.



### Hard Rock Sacramento

Micrographic on [cleanliness and distancing standards](#) and [philanthropic efforts](#)



### The Westin Houston Medical Center

Deploying UV Light robots for room cleaning ([article](#))



### Sunswept Resorts

[Employee COVID-19 Fundraiser](#)



### Marriot

[Rooms For Responders](#)



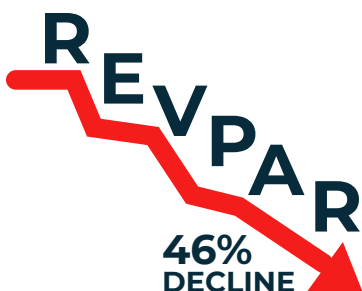
### The D Las Vegas

CEO, [Derek Stevens](#) purchased 2,000 tickets to Vegas to welcome guests back to a clean and safe environment

## RECENT TRENDS IN TRAVEL:



- A full recovery path may take **18 months** for the United States (Cornell)
- We may not see significant occupancy increases until August or September (Cornell)
- 2020 will experience a **REVPAR decline of 46%**. Pre-COVID occupancy rates and a positive REVPAR may not resume until after 2023 (Cornell)
- OTAs are expecting a similar pattern at the national and international levels (Cornell)
- As of April 5, we're beginning to see an increase in booking data in North America (Sojern)
- Luxury hotels are seeing an upward trend for longer lead time bookings, while economy hotels see the opposite








## About

A leading digital marketing and brand management company, REQ outpaces changes in today's rapidly evolving media landscape by bringing brand, reputation, advocacy, and business results to new heights. Offering a comprehensive suite of solutions and technologies that define, connect, and protect brands, REQ serves global companies and leaders in healthcare, technology, real estate, government, hospitality, retail, and finance. The company has been named to both the Inc. 500 and Deloitte Fast 500 lists as one of the fastest growing companies in America and has received numerous creative and workplace culture awards.

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