

A top-down view of a man with a beard, wearing a bright yellow sweater, lying on his back on a bed with white linens. A silver laptop is open on his chest, and he is holding an orange smartphone in his right hand. A red cord is plugged into his ear. To his left, on the wooden floor, is a black suitcase and a small woven basket containing green plants. The entire image has a warm, orange-toned overlay.

COVID STRATEGY EBOOK: **HOTEL MARKETING**

BE PREPARED FOR MARKET
RECOVERY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

HOTEL MARKETING QUICK WINS

- 1.1 Don't underestimate the marketing resources required to successfully reopen
- 1.2 Engage with your local community
- 1.3 Get creative with your promotions
- 1.4 Be aware of trends in consumer behaviour

CHAPTER 2

HOTEL MARKETING AND GUEST ENGAGEMENT

- 2.1 Be flexible with your room rates and cancellation policies
- 2.2 Signpost hygiene measures
- 2.3 Expose the backbone of your establishment
- 2.4 Encourage forward thinking

CHAPTER 3

HOTEL MARKETING AND TEAM ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1 Take advantage of this slow time
- 3.2 Work closely with HR

CHAPTER 4

HOTEL MARKETING AND ONLINE PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 Assess your representation on all your online platforms
- 4.2 Make sure you're featured on every potential customer source
- 4.3 Be specific and clear when defining your USP

CHAPTER 5

HOTEL MARKETING AND BRAND EQUITY

- 5.1 Review your messaging and its effect on your (desired) customer base
 - 5.2 Build a community around your company story and amplify it
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CHAPTER ONE

HOTEL MARKETING QUICK WINS

PIVOT YOUR HOTEL MARKETING STRATEGY TO WORK AROUND THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Featuring advice from:

[Katie Hokin](#), Founder and Director of [AccomBoost](#)

[Luis Enrique Galdamez Echeverria](#), CEO of [FashionPotluck.com](#)

[Perryn Khoo](#), Digital Account Manager at [WME Australia](#),

If you're like many in the industry, you've been working on a long-term hotel marketing strategy to gradually attract hotel guests back to your property. Read on for a host of clever ideas that you can apply immediately to kickstart post-crisis recovery, boost your online presence and in-stay offering.

1.1 DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE MARKETING RESOURCES REQUIRED TO SUCCESSFULLY REOPEN

Luis's experience has taught him that generosity with your time and resources is key when there are multiple messages to communicate relevant to different stages of one's recovery.

- **Keep in mind that creating content is only half the work.**
Getting it in front of the right people and encouraging them to engage with it is just as important.
- **Identify which media or social channels your audience uses to consume content.**
Do they prefer Instagram over Facebook? Do they read local newspapers and magazines (both online and print)? Answering these questions will help you decide what type of content to create and where to publish it, so you can make the most of every piece.
- **Show your staff returning to work and how you are preparing the hotel to welcome guests once again.**
Make sure to highlight your new hygiene and safety procedures. Once you have reopened, it's time to show your property in action. Stage photos with models and staff or opt for more candid shots of real guests (only if they agree, of course).
- **User-generated content remains a good way to promote your hotel in these unusual times.**
This means encouraging guests to share photos of their stay via their preferred social channels, tagging you in them and using your hashtag.



CHAPTER ONE

1.2 ENGAGE WITH YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

You can track this content with a hashtag tracker and re-share at your discretion. Members of your target audience will see others enjoying themselves at your property, which will deposit your name and imagery into the front of their mind ahead of planning their next hotel stay.

- **Keep in mind that each phase will require some degree of spend, for content creation and promotion alike.**

When allocating budget towards creating and amplifying your content, make sure you consider the need for specific messaging at different phases of the reopening process. Budget accordingly for content creators, designers, paid social, paid search and paid coverage/advertising to get yourself in front of potential guests.

- **Think about who your current target audience is and how you can reach them.**

Domestic guests are probably your best bet in the short and medium term since international travel is still restricted in many countries (e.g. closed borders or mandatory on-arrival quarantine).

- **Offer special events and promotions to your local community while you wait for travellers from abroad to return.**

Create events and offerings that they can easily take advantage of. Use this not only to initiate the first trickle in your returning stream of revenue, but to let your wider audiences know that you're up and running and already providing value to your customers.

- **Prepare for changes in your country or region by returning to business with this narrowed focus.**

This foresight is especially important since rules, regulations and restrictions are changing quickly these days.

1.3 GET CREATIVE WITH YOUR PROMOTIONS

Since COVID-19 is an unprecedented situation and every hotel is different, there is no one-size-fits-all answer for promotions. Katie sounds off below with a brilliant list of actionable hotel marketing ideas.

- **Think outside the box with your promotions.**

Create Covid-ready experiences to offer moments of joy for adults and children alike.

- **New offers can include Covid-aware up-sell deals or upgrades.**

You could offer 3-for-2 night staycation offers, a special up-sell deal on breakfast or other services at your hotel or less conventional ideas such as selling day-use rooms for people wanting to work remotely in a quiet, sanitary environment close to home.

CHAPTER ONE

1.4 BE AWARE OF TRENDS IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

- **Ask your newsletter subscribers or social media followers for their opinion.**

Understand what would entice them to come stay with you. Make it clear that your team are open to suggestions from your customers to increase your chances of creating promotions they are truly interested in.

- **Test your promotions to see what your guests respond to best.**

Refine your approach to give the right guests the right experiences at the right time.

Perryn encourages you to think outside the box when it comes to enhancing your hotel's online presence with SEO. If now's not the time to future-proof your approach, we don't know when is!

- **Think about voice activation software.**

Capture the increasing number of potential guests using this method to search for their holidays by making sure to structure your content clearly for use in voice search results.

- **Use a Q&A format or include phrases that resemble a voice search query.**

If you find this difficult to do on your homepage or in your room description, having a few blog posts optimised for this purpose will help generate traffic from voice search.

- **These posts can list nearby landmarks, sites or other things people can visit or do while they are staying with you.**

They can include topics such as 'best restaurants/ bars/ cafes/ museums/ family activities... in your city'. What phrases do you normally use when speaking to Siri or Google?

- **Create a Covid-related blog post to highlight your city's and country's regulations and first-response steps.**

Update it regularly so guests can inform themselves before the trip and prepare themselves accordingly. A high-demand topic like this is a great way to drive traffic to your site, if formatted with SEO in mind.

CHAPTER TWO

HOTEL MARKETING & GUEST ENGAGEMENT

TWEAK YOUR HOTEL MARKETING STRATEGY TO KEEP YOUR CUSTOMERS ENGAGED THROUGH PERIODS OF LOW TRAVEL.

Featuring advice from:

[Katie Hokin](#), Founder and Director of [AccomBoost](#)

[Luis Enrique Galdamez Echeverria](#), CEO of [FashionPotluck.com](#)

[Perryn Khoo](#), Digital Account Manager at [WME Australia](#),

Covid-19 doesn't need to ruin your business – make changes where possible and reduce any additional barriers to booking. Read on for some suggestions on what you should be doing to keep your customers engaged.



2.1 BE FLEXIBLE WITH YOUR ROOM RATES & CANCELLATION POLICIES

Offer generous cancellation policies that allow guests to move bookings or cancel them for free. Since the threat of a second wave may still loom large in your customers' minds, it would make sense to give them peace of mind when booking.

2.2 SIGNPOST HYGIENE MEASURES

In addition to carrying out reinforced cleaning schedules and hygiene measures, make sure that this extra effort is easily noticed by your guests and website visitors. Create a video if budget permits!

Share details of your new hygiene measures on your social media channels as well. Can you follow your executive housekeeper for a day to show which new tasks are part of the daily cleaning routine? Have you bought any new equipment you could show off in a fun boomerang or time-lapse story? Use this approach to showcase your efforts, especially if you don't have the budget for a video.

CHAPTER TWO

2.3 EXPOSE THE BACKBONE OF YOUR ESTABLISHMENT



Make an appeal to your customers' human side by documenting the day-to-day and showing the personal side of your business. Showcase the many staff members doing their part to keep your company alive. Do this on social media by highlighting fun and challenging moments or featuring individual staff members and their personal stories.

2.4 ENCOURAGE FORWARD THINKING

Your tone and style of communication may unconsciously waver- do your best to keep it upbeat, confident, and full of exciting imagery. Ensure language used in your communication maintains references to the future and continuity. Help people look forward to brighter times!

CHAPTER THREE

HOTEL MARKETING & TEAM ENGAGEMENT

GIVE YOUR HOTEL MARKETING A PERSONAL TOUCH
BY NURTURING EMPLOYEES' ADVOCACY OF YOUR
BRAND AND PROPERTY

Featuring advice from: [Luis Enrique Galdamez Echeverria](#), CEO of [FashionPotluck.com](#)

This section will focus on how you can work with HR to keep your team happy, giving them active parts in the effort to keep your business afloat. Read on for universally tried-and-tested approaches to nurturing brand advocacy among your team members.



3.1 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS SLOW TIME

Make your values and mission abundantly clear. Ensure your values are known to your employees. It may sound silly, but if they don't know the specific qualities you promote, they won't be able to advocate them!

Re-evaluate, refine or update your mission and values. Think about how you can better integrate them into day-to-day operations. Working on this together with your team will bring everyone onto the same page and ensure you move forward together.

CHAPTER THREE

3.2 WORK CLOSELY WITH HR



As you can imagine, brand advocacy ties in closely with employee satisfaction. Work with HR to make sure any outstanding issues are addressed before encouraging your staff to use their voices.

Beyond dealing with problems, HR should be working to create regular moments of unity, validation and joy for your team – all cornerstones of brand advocacy. This crisis offers a unique chance to create such moments.

Think about where you and your team could step up and make a positive impact together, be it for guests or your local community. Many hotels around the world have taken great initiative to host medical teams, organise food drives or donate cleaning supplies. Could you offer something similar?

- **Champion your strongest team members**

Identify those working with you that display exceptionally good character, work ethic and belief in what you are collectively doing as a company. This in itself is a way to gently guide the representation of your brand without rigidly filtering content, which brings us to the next point.

- **Loosen the reins on your brand guidelines (in this context)**

The very reason brand advocacy works is that it is personal, in motivation and practice. You might say the same for social media. As accustomed as you are to enforcing your brand guidelines, remember that your employees' accounts are their own spaces to express themselves. Keep it real, keep them on the same page as you, and allow them to share their day-to-day experiences as they see fit.

Do let your staff know if there are a few guidelines you want them to follow, especially where privacy, safety and proprietary information are concerned.

- **Be open about the need for help**

Make it clear that your business could use the extra help from their valued employees. Empower your employees by reminding them of the value they bring to the table and the stake they have in the success of the company, individually and as a team.

CHAPTER THREE

- **Encourage effective mediums and storytelling**

Offer pieces of advice without constraining their preferred ways of storytelling. For instance, you might mention that Instagram stories typically result in more engagement and are suited to capturing day-to-day events.

An Instagram story takeover by one of your team members is a great way to show some behind the scenes activity, build a connection with your audience and make your staff an active part of your promotional efforts.

Your content (on your website, social media and everywhere else) reflects on your property and shapes your audience's impression of you. Find ways to emphasise the importance of correct spelling and grammar when you encourage your team to post about your hotel. This simple step will ensure content featuring your hotel always looks professional.

CHAPTER FOUR

HOTEL MARKETING AND ONLINE PERFORMANCE

THE BUILDING BLOCKS TO ACHIEVING A THRIVING ONLINE PRESENCE FOR YOUR HOTEL

Featuring advice from:

[Katie Hokin](#), Founder and Director of [AccomBoost](#)

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[Perryn Khoo](#), Digital Account Manager at [WME Australia](#),

In this chapter, we are getting into the bread and butter of market recovery operations – online performance. As a fundamental part of your hotel marketing strategy, you should review your online performance. You'll find that clarity of intention is once again key.

Online operations might be the one part of the hotel industry left relatively unscathed from the pandemic. Innovative tech platforms continue to provide clever ways to boost your traffic, revenue, and engagement.

In addition to these tools, you might want to review your online presence and performance and optimise it before getting into the swing of things again. Read on for some key ways to strengthen the online performance of your hotel.

4.1 ASSESS YOUR REPRESENTATION ON ALL YOUR ONLINE PLATFORMS

Luis's experience in online marketing has shown him that when the basic building blocks to establishing one's online presence are neglected, performance needlessly suffers.

- **Check that your basic SEO is on point**

Make sure your title tags on each page are clearly written and unique. Review your meta descriptions, so they are up to date and accurate for each page. Search for your keywords to see if you are ranking well on the results page and go over your website copy to improve your position if needed. Only a few simple steps can make a big difference here and lead to a traffic boost that supports your business.

- **Maintain coherent messaging across all of your platforms**

Keep your messages consistent and clear across your website, social media and partner sites. This slow business period is the best time to review all of these platforms, update your information and create a consistent, well-branded online presence.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.2 MAKE SURE YOU'RE FEATURED ON EVERY POTENTIAL CUSTOMER SOURCE

- **Analyse data on your site's traffic and social media**

This information is fundamental to building future strategies in light of any changes that may have occurred during the crisis. Use tools like Google Analytics to see how your website traffic has changed. Where do your site visitors come from now? Are they from your city, region or the whole country? Can you see new trends you might be able to leverage in promotions?

Do the same for social media. Check which posts, stories and campaigns gain the most traction and with whom. Use this knowledge when creating new content or promoting your deals and offers.

Katie's success with Accomboost is among many things due to industry-specific marketing tactics. Below are some reminders of what to prioritise in terms of digital marketing for your hotel.

- **List your hotels on all relevant channels**

Work through an up-to-date list of sites that are a must to be featured on, like the Siteminder list that Katie suggests in the video below. Make sure your property is present on each, with plenty of up-to-date information and photos. A strong online presence will help you get in front of a wider audience and can lead to more people finding out about your hotel.

- **Examine your user journey**

A common journey for those planning a holiday will include a browse on a popular OTA, resulting in a shortlist of hotels. From there, a holiday planner might individually Google these hotel names to learn more about each property and check rates. Try following this for one of your competitors to see which channels they appear on and make sure that you haven't missed any, including meta sites such as Google Hotel Ads and Trivago. Follow this with a search for your own hotel to see your website's position on the results page and how your listings look. Update them if necessary to ensure your information is accurate and up to date.

- **Increase your chances of direct bookings**

If your hotel site reflects rate parity and offers direct booking incentives, you have a much higher chance of driving bookings via your site. This boosts your bottom line as you won't have to pay commissions to OTAs.

CHAPTER FOUR

Do your best to ensure that your photos are up to date, high-quality and look stunning! They are the most powerful tools in seducing would-be customers.



4.3 BE SPECIFIC & CLEAR WHEN DEFINING YOUR USP

- **Review your online messaging**
Try another Google search of your property, this time paying attention to how a first-time visitor to your site might view your hotel. Is it accurate to what your brand wants to project? If not, what changes should you make?
- **Define your USP beyond generic terms**
Think beyond terms like 'luxury' – consider how attractive your unique selling proposition might be to your target market. If it doesn't quite align, do some research into what might tip the scales in your favour.
- **Online reviews are a gold mine for insight**
Customer reviews are a great place to learn what stood out about your property to your guests. Read them and highlight the things people love about your property on your website and OTA listings.
- **Help Google understand your USP**
Proliferate SEO-friendly content around your USP, so Google understands that you are associated with whatever that may be (i.e. champagne breakfasts, rooftop swimming). This could mean mentioning your USP in several relevant places on your website, writing a blog post about it or including it in your link texts.



CHAPTER FOUR

- **Optimise your Google My Business listing**

Update your images regularly and once again, include your specific USP. The more active you are with updating and engaging with your GMB listing, the more Google will favour it with Google Search and Maps users.

- **Reach out to your customers**

Encourage them to leave reviews, mentioning your USP, e.g. 'We hope you enjoyed our champagne breakfast'. This will make it more likely that they mention your USP in their review, which will only strengthen Google's understanding that you are associated with what you would like to promote as your signature offering.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOTEL MARKETING & BRAND EQUITY

APPLY UNIVERSAL BRAND EQUITY PRINCIPLES
TO YOUR HOTEL MARKETING STRATEGY TO
SUPERCHARGE YOUR BRAND IMAGE

Featuring advice from:

[Luis Enrique Galdamez Echeverria](#), CEO of [FashionPotluck.com](#)
[Perryn Khoo](#), Digital Account Manager at [WME Australia](#),

For our final chapter of the Hotel Marketing category of our COVID Strategy Series, our experts offer ways to reinforce your hotel's brand image in time for market recovery. Go back to basics –rebuild your approach to hotel marketing to improve your brand equity!

5.1 REVIEW YOUR MESSAGING & ITS EFFECT ON YOUR (DESIRED) CUSTOMER BASE

- **Clearly define your business and USP**

Perryn's chief piece of advice in terms of brand equity is this: distill your reason for existence into as short a statement as possible, then be sure to consistently and clearly use this statement throughout all of our brand's messaging. Weave this sentiment through your staff training, customer education, social media and PR, so that it is omnipresent in both private and public-facing arenas.

- **Educate yourself on the people that form your client base**

Research demographics and interests in your past and current customers to learn how best to speak to them. Consider whether your ideal customer is included within these groups or not. If not, devise new lines of communication, content and amplification that would resonate with them.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.2 BUILD A COMMUNITY AROUND YOUR COMPANY STORY AND AMPLIFY IT



- **Make use of your partnerships**
Explore guest blogging opportunities with complementary businesses and peers to build backlinks to your site. The options here are limitless. Start by checking if you can write a guest post for local companies such as tour operators, entertainment or lifestyle businesses. See if you can put together a feature about your destination for a newspaper or magazine (online or print) or collaborate with other travel and tourism brands you share an audience with.
- **Build your community on a story you want to tell**
Use your company's mission and history to craft a story that will underpin your efforts in community-building. A story-driven approach like this will not only help you create a personal connection with your audience, but will allow you to showcase your property as a destination with a story, rather than 'just another hotel'.