

EXPERT ADVICE GUIDE

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Jumpstarting Sales for a Return to Trading

Q. Where can I get updated information on Covid-19 for the Tourism Industry?

Go to the [Fáilte Ireland website](#). It is updated multiple times daily with all information relating to COVID 19 and tourism businesses. The website has information relating to a range of topics including Operations, HR and Finance.

Q. How do I handle cancellations?

- Every business must review their approach to cancellations.
- Best practice is to **be as flexible as possible** - working with your customer to postpone their booking and put any deposits taken against a future date
- However, where cancellation is inevitable, do work to find a suitable alternative and understand that the customer is not cancelling through choice but necessity
- The positive impact on your reputation by being flexible and working with the customer cannot be underestimated
- If stepped deposits are now due for a future event, consider taking a flexible approach, understanding the customer's reluctance to commit further in the current uncertain situation
- Remember, making your customer feel safe, secure and valued will be remembered and will help protect your business into the future

Q. What should I communicate to my customers right now?

- Communication is really important right now - across all your different customer bases. Make sure your messages are relevant to their needs
- For consumer communications - leverage your social media channels and website. Include messages on:
 - Your COVID-19 approach

- Your cancellation policies
- Where possible include a message around **Postpone Don't Cancel.**
- Communicate information relating to closures or restricted services. Most importantly, give your customers details on how and who to contact in your business for queries, even if it's not currently operating
- Finally, don't forget some messages of support and togetherness will be appreciated in these difficult times

Q. What sort of communication process should I adopt for weddings and social events?

- Be proactive - reach out now by phone or personalised email to all couples for all weddings scheduled in the short and medium term
- Ensure everyone who has a wedding or event booked in the hotel this year knows how to reach key people in your business, especially if you are closed currently
- For weddings within relatively short timelines - anticipate queries regarding possible postponement. Have available dates to hand to discuss and hold if necessary. We know for many there will be limited prime days or dates so before the call, decide what incentives you can offer to offset concerns the couples might have

Q. How should I approach my corporate clients or group buyers at the moment?

- Remember that many of your business partners are also suffering massive cancellations and business uncertainty
- Provide a specific communication to your buyers and another to your corporate clients. Recognise everyone's unique needs and challenges
- Reassure your customers that you will work together to find solutions for future events and groups
- Keeping the communication lines open on a human level will continue to build trust and relationships

Q. What can I do to structure my team properly now to do the best work possible?

- Assign responsibilities for your key segments or types of business. Ensure you have dedicated touchpoints and people for weddings, corporate and general consumer queries
- Decide now on your approach and communication plan for each segment during this time. Schedule your communications appropriately
- Ensure all customers but especially those with future events on the books have a way of contacting the business and their representatives, even if it is closed currently. This will ensure a sense of responsiveness

Q. What sort of work would be beneficial to undertake now?

- Revisit your sales material - interrogate your proposals – ensure they really speak to your unique selling points and are include compelling calls to action
- Update content and imagery
- Update website content - keep pages dormant until you need them
- Review your PMS and CRM - clean up your databases, de-dupe and segment them to make sure that the most relevant messages are getting to the right people
- Start working on your content calendar for social media posts - write sample posts, collate images from online sources, think about annual holidays and create a bank of posts that can be used seasonally
- Consider what will be your business' approach to account management when trading recommences; create account management plans
- Create a Return to Trading plan for your business with key priorities for all your team.

Information on each of these and others, as they become available, are listed on the Fáilte Ireland website.

Didn't find the answer you were looking for?

Email businesssupports@failteireland.ie with your question.