



2020

ALLIANCE CONNECTION INC.

COVID-19 Roadmap to Recovery

BRAVE VISION.
DECISIVE ACTION.
BOLD INNOVATION.

RECONNECTING THE WORLD AND BUILDING A HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE



Things may feel overwhelming right now, but there is one thing we know: **the travel and tourism industry is resilient.** Every crisis we have faced in the last 20 years proves that the market will recover. There is a lot of work ahead of us, but by maximizing resources and budget and making high-impact marketing decisions, **there will be success.** We hope this information helps you rise above the day to day challenges by providing a collaborative, cohesive and targeted approach towards recovery.





LET'S REPLOT OUR COURSE

We have brutally difficult work ahead of us. We have faced crises before but those challenges pale in comparison to what we face today.

Now that we have time to react we will shift in phases from defense to smart offense. Smart leaders are working through 5 critical phases:

- 1 Operational/Financial Plans** - How to get work done with the current budget restrictions
- 2 Team Plans** - Motivated, efficient and profit-focused employees, unfortunate layoffs or furloughed opportunities impacting critical resources
- 3 Proactive Measures** - Get in a position of readiness and prepare - more than your competitors
- 4 Vision/Future** - Ask yourself, what parts of normal are we rushing back to? What parts should be different?
- 5 Informed Marketing Decisions** - High impact, value driven results, for what consumers are ready to hear at this given moment along with short and long term recovery recommendations



WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

When you don't know where to begin and what the future holds, what can you do to mitigate the risk of COVID-19's impact on your business, while also developing and strengthening future growth?

While Travel is on Pause: Although people are not traveling now and destinations, resorts and cruise lines are temporarily shuttered or beginning the re-opening process, the travel and tourism industry should stay connected with past and future guests through social, email, and editorial content that entertains and adds value to maintain a strong brand relationship.

From Crisis to Communication: Develop your public relations, social media, and industry outreach plans which should be nimble and ready to pivot at the right moments.

Stay Informed: Continue to gather critical research, facts and data to make informed marketing decisions.

Generate Travel Demand: Ramp up marketing efforts focused on brand awareness and fueling new guests into the booking funnel where safety and trust may take the place of price and promotion.

Serve Don't Sell: Offer reassurance across all levels of communication. Ensure a flexible cancellation policy and sensitive messaging relevant to the situation.



WHAT WE KNOW

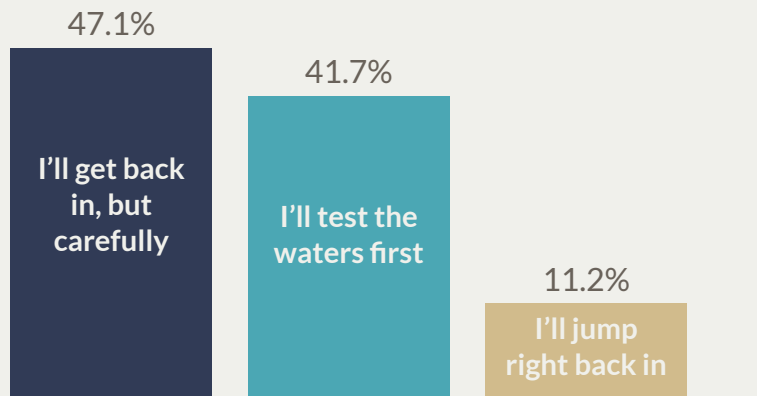
CRITICAL YET EVER-EVOLVING INFORMATION TO GUIDE MARKETING DECISIONS

Travelers remain optimistic, as they cautiously watch the reopening of U.S. cities, restaurants, bars and activities before they resume travel. Recovery will be in phases starting with domestic, closer to home travel and gradually increase to more global itineraries.

We aggregated the current figures and models from esteemed sources such as:

***Phocuswright, Travel Weekly, Overseas Leisure Group, World Tourism Organization, Destination International**

In the period after coronavirus, how are you going to approach getting back into travel?



The industry is experiencing occupancy declines in epic proportions but the outlook is starting to improve:

Nearly 7-in-10 respondents say they miss vacationing a lot and over half miss the very act of planning vacations.

87% of travelers are looking for announcements about enhanced cleaning strategies from resorts.

- This tells us that not only are people starting to think about traveling again, but they're looking to hotels for an answer about whether it's safe to proceed.

66% list beaches, lakes and rivers as the top spots they would return to first.

NAVIGATING UNCHARTED WATERS

Today, there are promising signs of gradual improvement, but we still have a long road ahead and statistics will continue to evolve as we progress through recovery.

Crisis communications remain an important effort for most of the industry, **76%** of respondents still remained focused on crisis management and reassurance efforts, although it is projected to decline over the next 60 days falling to an estimated **44%** of communication efforts.

Approximately **one-third** of travelers remain committed to postponing, rather than canceling scheduled travel for the months ahead. **63%** of travelers agree that they would be more likely to visit a public place or fly on an aircraft that displays a certificate issued by a local government authority or credible organization indicating that it has adhered to established protocols for sanitization.

Holiday bookings are showing more reservations over last year, which shows there's a lot of optimism and people are planning ahead. Reservations for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's stays are up **38%**, **40%** and **23%**, respectively, compared to the same time in April 2019.



WHEN CRISIS BECOMES COMMUNICATION

Now more than ever we need to lean on each other and when the time's right we will connect the world again.

Crisis is evolving to deeper communication and community efforts as media cycles slowly shift and we continue to do our part as responsible citizens as society reopens and we learn to navigate our new normal.

Hometown human interest stories, frontline health care and emergency personnel, essential workers, and missed moments are inspiring media stories filled with courage and hope.

Social media conversations are at an all time high, with usage up 121% industry leaders will continue to use social platforms to bring virtual experiences and foster togetherness in these challenging times.



STAY CONNECTED

BE PREPARED FOR TRAFFIC SHIFTS AND A CONTENT DEMAND FOR REAL WORLD EXPERIENCES

Social media content collaborations are a crucial part of recovery along with enticing copy and engaging creative to break through the noise and capture audiences.

Gain critical mass in this highly-trafficked marketing channel where consumption is at an all time high, but be prepared for traffic shifts as consumers will eventually pivot from social media to real world experiences.

Reach new social audiences as usage across multiple generations is rapidly expanding. Boomers and Gen X have discovered the viability of new channels to communicate with family and friends.

Don't forget your review sites and comments. Responses should remain timely and comprehensive to best address both positive and negative comments and reviews to reassure travelers.

Embrace virtual reality, voice assistance and interactive mobile applications to inspire travel.



NURTURE RELATIONSHIPS

Use this time to build and strengthen relationships with your brand advocates. Be a pillar of support and gain critical feedback from colleagues, valuable industry partners and loyal customers. They are the front line and vital virtual think tanks that will be the catalyst of discussion and lead to innovative solutions.

Keep the communication flowing with your most valuable segments and travel agent partners. Keep your industry colleagues informed with facts, timely collateral and communication, revised marketing guides for the new normal, and digital sales tools and training. Most of all spread positivity, hope, and strength during these difficult times.





PROVIDE REASSURANCE

Personal safety is the top priority as we reopen business and recreational activities around the globe.

The pursuit of a cleaner, healthier world is a critical communication strategy. As you focus on operational decisions, marketing plans and distribution tactics, put people and their concerns first.

Communicate your readiness to welcome visitors that can be activated upon the first indicators of recovery.

Develop valuable third party accreditation and certification partnerships.

REASSURANCE

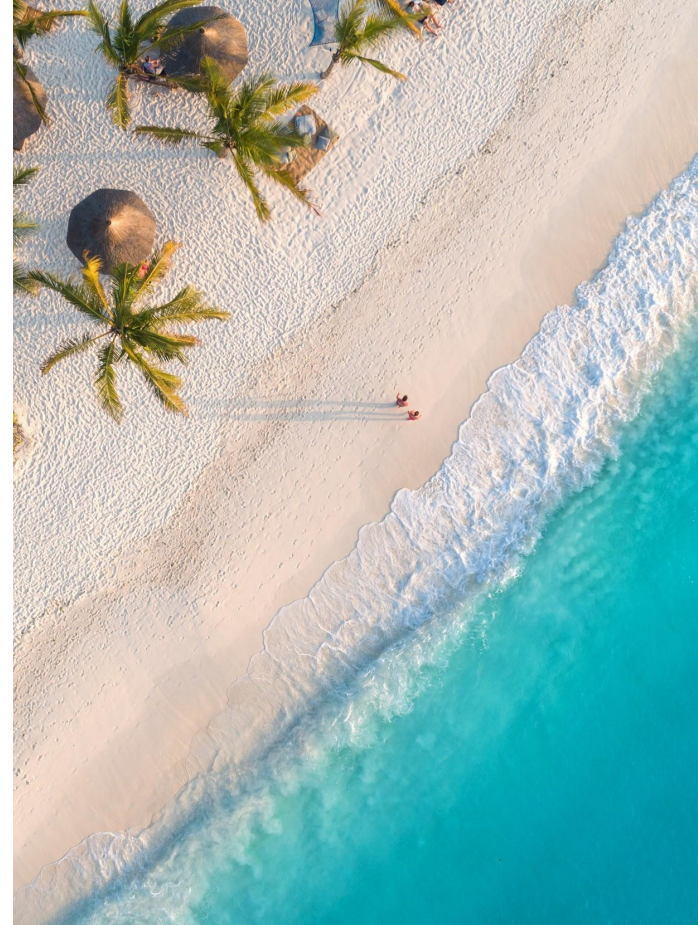


INSPIRE TRAVEL TODAY FOR TOMORROW

The time to lean in and find new and thoughtful ways to communicate is now.

With phased opens of commerce in the U.S. and increasing pent up travel demand, it is now more important than ever to reach early travel adopters.

Connect with your most loyal brand ambassadors and repeat guests since travel feels more familiar and safe to this consumer segment.



SERVE DON'T SELL

Create innovative ways to communicate and connect travelers to your brand. Develop sensitive and thought-provoking messaging to deliver the highest level of results and engagement.

For the immediate future, bring your brand to life through virtual vacation experiences and social media content.

Introduce at home social content such as Spotify playlists, culinary segments, art exhibits, cultural connections, live performances, and digital gifts like a downloadable piece of art which can later be transformed into destination experiences such as a class with the artist.

SERVE DON'T SELL





RECOVERY

COUNTING THE DAYS

As destinations begin to re-open there is a shift in consumer preferences to vacation rentals over hotels, driving rather than flying, and an increase in the use of travel insurance and personal travel advisors.

Domestic Travel

Domestic travel is appealing for shorter stays, familiar destinations, and closer to home options for those travelers who are not yet ready to fly the friendly skies.

It is the ideal time for Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVB's) to increase travel marketing initiatives to meet summer and holiday travel demands.

Travelers are exhibiting strong trust in official destination marketing organizations ("DMO's") and CVB's. When asked about the resources they would trust to provide information needed to travel safely, DMO's were cited second only to friends and family.



GO LOCAL

As states ease social distancing measures the demand for domestic travel will continue to increase.

Travel preferences for domestic destinations reachable by car will help rebound U.S. travel and tourism. A recent study found that **82% of travelers had changed their summer travel plans** to incorporate shorter stays that are closer to home.



LOCAL RECOVERY

Instill a sense of connection for the recovery of communities across your marketing and promotional messaging.

Marketing campaigns may include **#SpotTheStops scavenger hunts** in partnership with social media influencers, or **human interest campaigns** to nominate a hometown hero, and partnering with local businesses to craft compelling and authentic destination experiences to foster recovery and generate exposure.



ROADTRIP REVOLUTION

Domestic destinations will gain critical market share as the drive market will increase from the normal 2.5 hour road trip and expand to regional and even national draw across the United States.

People will be hitting the roadways and exploring destinations now more than ever. Create **promotional partnerships with insurance companies, gas stations, and even RV rentals to put your destination on the map.**

This is also an opportunity for international destinations and resorts to plan media campaigns and promotional partnerships throughout the summer that reach this increased audience. **Out of Home advertising will be an effective marketing tool** and promotional partnerships with fast food restaurants, convenience stores and gas stations could bring expanded marketing reach through barter based sweepstakes, insta-win programs and loyalty rewards.

Share the journey by **partnering with social media influencers to chronicle their trip** through a content collaboration and to maximize the impact and marketing reach.



INTERNATIONAL RECOVERY

When people get more comfortable, they'll continue to expand their travel horizons, starting with domestic and then moving to international travel.

Capitalize on your first adopters and brand ambassadors, showing the world it is safe to travel again.

Inspire new ways to vacation through social media content collaborations like Alliance Connection's flagship social media initiatives **Where In The World** or **Select My Stay** by engaging a highly impressionable audience filled with loyal fans. This unique marketing approach allows consumers to get an indepth look at travel opportunities as they curate their favorite influencers vacation including everything from the resort and destination selection to daily activities.



GAIN MARKETING MOMENTUM

TARGETED AUDIENCES

Develop comprehensive audience segment recovery plans backed by facts and innovative strategies for immediate and long term recovery.



Loyal



Luxury



Multi-Generational



Millennials



Gen X



Baby Boomers



Gen Z



LOYALIST

From consumer brand advocates to valuable industry partners, the connection to your most loyal fans is undeniable and they **will be one of the first audiences to recover**.

Nurture these valuable relationships through a regular communication cadence, exclusive offers (past guests), encourage stewardship through referrals and information sharing, increase remarketing and retargeting efforts, and engage in valuable social media connections.

Loyalists will be the first to share their experiences with their online social media audience, in-person with friends, and write long-standing reviews, thus **becoming a valuable word of mouth marketing tool**.





WELCOME BACK HOME!

Host a **Welcome Home Event** that shows you are ready to welcome visitors. Illustrating a vibrant resort and destination experience will evoke consumer confidence. Create **a compelling multi-layered event activation to attract social influencers, media outlets, travel advisors, vacation club owners, MICE meeting planners and more!** It will be a critical and timely way to dig deeper and gain valuable reach through effective media, PR, and influencer marketing strategies.

Utilize the content, footage, and assets to the fullest across social and digital platforms, then wrap with bonus media campaigns for a 360° approach.





LUXURY

With less economic fallout and increasing eagerness to travel, the luxury travel segment will lead the industry's recovery. With highly effective marketing efforts you will want to **reach the 76% of households with a HHI of \$150k+ that plan to travel in the next 12-months.** Over 35% of these households are currently exploring fall and winter vacation options for 2020/2021.

Reach this viable market through high quality travel influencer collaborations and **leading luxury brand partnerships** that drive an unparalleled level of exposure, thereby maximizing your marketing dollars.

Create aspirational once-in-a-lifetime travel programs with added value amenities and premium experiences to increase market share and appeal to this noteworthy audience. Take it one step further and develop a **Guru Getaway by partnering with lifestyle experts to host their fans and followers for an interactive event.**



TRAVEL MARKETING ACROSS GENERATIONS

CREATING SUCCESSFUL GENERATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD AND WELL INTO 2021

A Common Thread

Now more than ever emotion, not price, will be behind travelers' decision making processes. Travel and tourism marketers will have more pressure than ever to create dynamic campaigns, and the one thing that all generations share is the fact that activities and experiences drive their travel decisions.

Although each generation will be affected differently, all will be forced to acclimate to a new normal. Each generation is facing the pandemic on their own terms and as marketers we are constantly reminded that in every crisis there is opportunity.

Millennials are the most eager generation to get back out and explore the world again, and we anticipate that other generations will soon follow.

MILLENNIALS

Millennials are no stranger to marketers. They are the largest generation and their appetite for travel surpasses all others.

Reach this highly viable travel audience segment with complete transparency to gain their valuable trust. **90% of Millennials value brand authenticity over “perfect and packaged” messaging of the hotel.** Travel and tourism partners are encouraged to continue to move towards storytelling. Sharing the stories and faces behind the scenes vs. just the features of the resort, is a great way to forming compelling connections with this audience.

Millennials are eager to travel once the world opens up again and they are currently **spending over three hours a day on social media dreaming of their next adventure.** **Content, Content, Content** - video and shareable assets are crucial to engage this audience. Create **collaborations with YouTube vloggers and social media influencers** to deliver shorter, consumable bite size messaging and authentic content.



SayNTouch.com & The New York Post

Alliance Connection 2020



MILLENNIALS

Promotional offers are appealing, although Millennials, regardless of average HHI, will invest heavily in meaningful vacations and cultural experiences. They **currently love taking advantage of low price promotional offers** showing little fear of the virus if they score a great deal.

Millennials do not have a group preference for any specific type of vacation. Some like high adventure while others want to relax on the beach, some seek out all-inclusive travel and some navigate their journeys on completely independent itineraries.

And now, millennials will begin traveling with their **Gen Alpha Kids** in hand. By 2025 this new generation will make up **2 billion members** and they are expected to be the most transformative generation yet. They are already impacting the spending behaviors of their millennial parents, so **don't overlook family experiences when marketing to this generation.**



GEN X

A LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE AND HISTORY OF RIDING OUT CRISES

They are commonly referred to as the “sandwich generation” today, taking care of both their parents and growing kids, which makes it harder for them to travel as frequently as other generations, but **when they do travel - they spend more.**

Gen X makes up more than half of senior leadership roles around the globe which translates to more discretionary income. **Gen X is eager to experience new places** and values work-life balance.

Most Gen X'ers will think long and hard about what they want to do during the remaining chapters of their lives. They are battle tested generals coming off of the most important deployment, driven by career changes, both voluntary and involuntary, and **travel demand will continue to increase across this generation.**





GEN X

CAPTURE THEIR ATTENTION

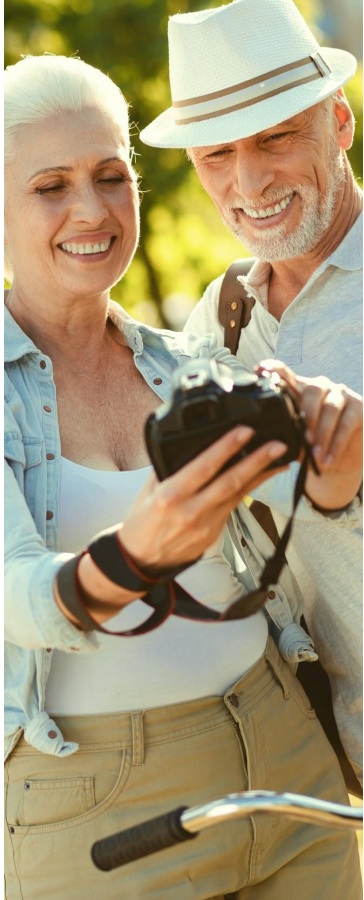
Gen X puts a specific focus on food and activities, where **45% of U.S. Gen X'ers plan travel around food and drink options and spend more of their travel budget on food than any other generation.** Drawing in Gen X by focusing on food tourism has a high chance of not only increasing demand but also providing a more balanced distribution of visitors.

The key to getting the attention of Gen X is building a creative strategy that goes beyond merely getting them to the destination. They **rank cultural experiences as #1 reason they select a destination.**

They are your **prime demographic for vacation club ownership, all-inclusive travel and family travel.** They are very brand loyal and ready to get back to their favorite spots.

Create VIP experiences for Gen X'ers to feel special and rewarded for their loyalty. Hosting a **Paired Affair** where live music is paired with local food and drinks would help increase interest for this generation as well as more food and beverage sales.





BOOMERS

An active retirement generation, Boomers are more likely to travel sooner than expected.

During COVID-19, a surprisingly large number of Boomers are not willing to accept that they are an at-risk generation. They don't feel the age they actually are, and they don't like their kids telling them what to do.

Therefore, this generational segment will most likely recover faster than anticipated.

Grocery delivery, GrubHub, FaceTime, Skype, Zoom and in-home entertainment has increased 54% across this generation and we see no signs of decline when the pandemic passes. They have been won over by the convenience, quality and efficiency that these digital tools provide, so these channels are ideal for promotional marketing partnerships and media planning opportunities.

Don't count them out across social media strategies, 84% of Boomers report that social media is likely to improve their lives. According to data from Statista, **YouTube was the most popular social media platform, with 70% of boomers saying they regularly used it.**

Although their digital footprint is increasing, Baby Boomers continue to value socializing with friends. They are actively rescheduling spring cruises for the fall. A recent publication shared by Dr. Erin Bromage, Associate Professor of Biology and Immunity has reached millions of readers addressing that *"When you think of outbreak clusters, cruise ships would probably come to mind. But that is incorrect, **cruise ship outbreaks don't even land in the top 50 outbreaks to date.**"*





BOOMERS

WAYS TO REACH THIS VALUABLE AUDIENCE

Create campaigns that are youthful and vibrant that give them a sense of freedom as they journey through their golden years.

Arguably Boomers still read print magazines and watch TV on big screens even with the usage of social media dramatically increasing, they still use it less than any other generation.

Reach millions of engaged audiences, including Boomers with minimal investment and maximum exposure by providing **vacation prizeing for top TV game shows**. It's a valuable way to reach a travel-prone audience when marketing budgets have been cut.



GEN Z

YOUR MOST PERSUASIVE GENERATION

Open minded, bucket list oriented, and already frequent travelers with their parents in tow. They are seeking unique, interactive social experiences, and **Gen Z is “spring breaking” all the rules.**

Think they're too young? Not so fast, born between 1996-2010, **77% of family vacation decisions are driven by the Gen Z's in the household.**

They are **frequent travelers, taking 2.8 leisure trips a year**, that value once in a lifetime vacation experiences. Gen Z's have a passion for unique bucket list like activities, and seek the best value for their money, or their parents' money.

They **spend 11% of travel budget on attractions and tours alone**, the most of any generation.

As Gen Z enters the workforce and active independent travel decisions increases, this generation will open up a myriad of opportunities for marketers.





GEN Z

It's time to reach these **influencers of the household** in a way that resonates with them through mobile activations, silly content, influencer engagement, aspirational bucket lists, high energy imagery and deal-based campaigns.

Gen Z has been truly “mobile” their entire lives and compelling vacation experiences must be Instagram worthy. **90% of this generation gets trip inspiration from social networks** and use their phone to plan every minute of it.

Two thirds of Gen Z travelers are undecided on a destination. When they decide to take a trip, their diverse trip preferences demonstrate broad opportunities for marketers to entice them.

Innovative social media activations like inviting them to curate some of their favorite social media personalities' vacation by voting on activities and following the influencer throughout their entire journey will go a long way in the decision making process.

Consider a **Class of 2020 “mulligan moments”** promotional campaign for grad's and their families to receive a discounted stay.



MULTI-GENERATIONAL

MISSED MOMENTS TRANSLATE INTO NEW MEANING FOR MULTI-GENERATIONAL TRAVEL



Consumers want nothing more than to be **#TogetherAgain**. With increased missed moments for the entire family, there is no better time to plan forward thinking campaigns and develop small group incentives and amenity offers to inspire holiday travel.

Travel messaging and planning should be easily accessible, informational and provide logistical ways to plan for small groups with ease. **Introduce a virtual family concierge to answer all of their questions and concerns and instill confidence about the new norm** while serving as valuable itinerary planners to help plan and celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, family reunions and more.



MULTI-GENERATIONAL PROMOTIONAL MARKETING

Run a promotional sweepstakes for **#FirstResponderFathers** where families across the U.S. can enter to win a family vacation, that runs during the weeks leading up to Father's Day.

Partner with consumer packaged goods brands and grocery stores to offer a family vacation sweepstakes, and for each vacation won, match a vacation donation for the valuable front line essential grocery store employees through an additional enter to win sweepstakes or social media nomination campaign.

Develop **influencer family event “come alongs”** where social media moms and family influencers can bring the entire family along and you can reach their valuable followers when they share their multi-generational family vacation across Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.



THE PURCHASE JOURNEY

MORE TIME TO DREAM TODAY, TRAVEL TOMORROW

Implementing BEST practices keeps loyalty strong and builds better relationships.

Risk-free booking options will drive the largest impact in sales over the next 60 days, where 42% of consumers would be ready to make a reservation today with a minimal deposit and no change or cancellation fee. Consider payment plans for booking a vacation to alleviate a large purchase at one time.

64% of consumers are highly satisfied with how travel companies have handled changes and cancellations for their current bookings.

Resorts will experience shorter booking windows in 2020 and consumers will book faster from their first point of contact.

Health and safety message plans are essential, and now more than ever the industry is recognizing how vital travel advisors are as their display of confidence can significantly impact future business growth.



CONFIDENCE IS MORE APPEALING THAN EVER

There is a fundamental shift in the sales and marketing funnel where price is no longer driving the sale.

PRE COVID-19



POST COVID-19





BOOKING DECISIONS MOVING FORWARD

Before COVID-19 this would be an easy decision for a traveler to choose the higher reputable hotel at a lower rate. But now consumers will prioritize factors that impact safety, reviews and responses to social content.

PRE COVID-19

	HOTEL A 	HOTEL B 
Overall Rating	4 Stars	3 Stars
Nightly Rate	\$70	\$75

POST COVID-19

	HOTEL A 	HOTEL B 
Overall Rating	4 Stars	3 Stars
Nightly Rate	\$70	\$75
Reviews (Since 3/10)	1 Negative	3 Positive
Response % (Since 3/10)	0%	100%
Social Content (Since 3/10)	No Updates	Daily Updates





SOLUTION BASED MARKETING WILL PREVAIL

We are all searching for the optimal way to recover business safely and responsibly. As we continue to monitor media cycles and shifts in sentiment to meet marketing demands, it's critical that we develop comprehensive marketing plans, innovative initiatives and take concise action to stand out in what will be a crowded marketing landscape in the very near future.

LEAN IN

INVEST IN IDEATION, INCUBATE IDEAS, CRAFT THE NARRATIVE, AMPLIFY THE STORY, ENGAGE AND CONVERT CUSTOMERS.

- **Stand out in a “sea of sameness”** - A high level of competition demands a creative, innovative and unique approach to break through, while creating interest on a broad scale to drive demand and conversion.
- **Reimagine** today's products and services to meet today's marketing demands.
- **Embrace Technology** from AI to VR and improve digital sales and marketing tools.
- **Build your content library** to easily translate across all marketing mediums and becomes a valuable collateral asset long after travel resumes.
- **Maximize your marketing spend** and reach a broader audience when promoting tourism through high impact promotional partnerships.
- **Invest in Social Media Influencer Marketing** that lives beyond a stay/play/post approach. Form impactful content collaborations and develop meaningful influencer activations to reach and engage targeted audiences.
- **Embrace the new normal**



According to Hinges 2020 marketing growth study - partnership marketing is in the top 5 most impactful marketing techniques including event sponsorships, promotional campaigns and integrated partnerships. **High growth companies are 3x more likely to use marketing partnerships as part of their overall strategy than slow or no-growth companies.**



STAY INFORMED AND CONNECTED

BRAVE VISION. DECISIVE ACTION. BOLD INNOVATION

We continue to be encouraged daily by the travel and tourism industry stakeholders thinking differently and acting boldly.

"One might argue that a global health catastrophe that has made daily life unrecognisable requires a conservative road back to familiar territory. But if this crisis is teaching us anything, it's there's no true normalcy to return to. The global consumer landscape will be revolutionised, we need to be ready, think like a visitor and design a robust reality. The right moves over the next few months can offer transformative long-term growth. These moves will start with quiet conversations and small steps; that can deliver quick wins and important progress." - **Glenn Jones, Bermuda Tourism Authority**



Alliance Connection is a unique platform of industry leading ideas and powerful, proficient, result driven marketing opportunities.

We connect lifestyle media, brand partners, and social influencers with the **travel and tourism industry** to reach and capture highly aligned audiences.



For more information visit www.allianceconnection.com or email: info@allianceconnection.com