

## Sales Planning for COVID-19 Recovery

Based on a webinar presented by Eva Gutsche with [STEM Consulting](#) on Thursday, May 21, 2020

The tourism industry’s recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will be a gradual process, but it is important to begin planning now to ensure that you’re ready to open your doors when the time is right. Understand what your visitors will be looking for following the pandemic and create a short-term consumer marketing strategy for the recovery phase. Be flexible and agile as you plan for the immediate future, and for 2021 and beyond. The time to plan is now. Identify the trigger events and be ready to jump into action.

### Skills and Attributes for Leading Through Crisis

It is important to see the big picture as you navigate through the current crisis. You will need to be empathetic; flexible; innovative; a visionary; and a teacher and a mentor to both your customers and your employees.

Being flexible and adaptable is essential. As you develop your sales and marketing plan, consider the facts you know now and what you can anticipate in the short-term, and be prepared to adapt your plan based on what is unknown at this time or could quickly change.

### Planning and Ambiguity

There are three things to consider as you move forward with planning:

Current Facts	Assumptions	The Unknown
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canada border will stay closed at least until June 21</li> <li>• Group size restrictions still in place</li> <li>• Inbound flights to NS still limited</li> <li>• Opening dates for many local businesses tba. <b>Update on May 27: Many businesses will reopen on June 5.</b></li> <li>• 14-day self-isolation for people coming into NS</li> <li>• Physical distancing required</li> <li>• Enhanced focus on health, hygiene, cleaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People will want to get out of the house</li> <li>• International market unlikely until 2021</li> <li>• Short haul, longer drive market will respond quickest</li> <li>• Long-haul Canada (flights) months away</li> <li>• Local and regional residents will likely stay closer to home</li> <li>• Desire to support local businesses and community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the opening dates of tourist services and amenities in my community?</li> <li>• What happens if COVID-19 cases started to rise again?</li> <li>• Will locals travel provincially or wait for borders to re-open?</li> </ul>

## Next Steps

### Short Term

To prepare for opening, you will need to consider all the options and create a plan so that you can quickly move into action when things shift. Consider product and experience changes to meet local market demand and focus on existing bookings that will likely materialize. Reach out to those customers who have visited your business in the past and encourage them to visit you again and to stay longer. This helps with revenue and managing new cleaning protocols. This is the time to consider various situations and Plan B options.

Here are examples of a best- and worst-case scenario. What would apply for your business?

#### Best Case Scenario

- Increased flights into Nova Scotia
- Self-isolation when returning to the province is lifted in NS & other Atlantic Canada provinces
- US border opens
- More businesses can open
- Group size increase

#### Worst Case Scenario

- US travel not rebounding until late summer or early fall or later
- Staff afraid to come to work
- Supply chain or product issues
- Delay of business reopening
- Social distancing and group size numbers don't shift

Be prepared for either scenario and plan accordingly!

### Longer Term Opportunities with the Travel Trade

Don't lose sight of the long term – 2021 and beyond. In order to secure contracts and business for 2021, the groundwork must begin now with your travel trade partners. Keep the communication lines open and help your travel trade partners plan and rebook for the future. Some trade partners are finding it challenging to get information in a timely manner. Remember, even if you aren't currently open for visitors, you need to continue to respond to inquiries from partners within 24 hours.

## 2020 Recovery Potential

### The Good News

- Research indicates that travellers will start post COVID-19 travel locally
- Spending by Nova Scotians currently accounts for 38% of tourism revenues
- Atlantic Canada accounts for close to one-half of overall non-resident visitation to Nova Scotia
- Based on current information, there is potential for local travel recovery in 2020
- Recovery does not depend on air capacity returning

**Resources:** [www.tourismns.ca/coronavirus](http://www.tourismns.ca/coronavirus)  
[www.novascotia.ca/opening-nova-scotia](http://www.novascotia.ca/opening-nova-scotia)

## KEY FACTORS

- Virus is contained in Nova Scotia, Canada, and globally
- Physical distancing measures are removed
- Travel restrictions lifted
- Tourism operators able to open for business
- Travellers are willing to travel
- Air capacity to Nova Scotia improves
- Willingness of Nova Scotians to welcome visitors