

# Market & User Research

To inspire the future of SG tourism activities



Maltem  
Consulting Group

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# Introduction

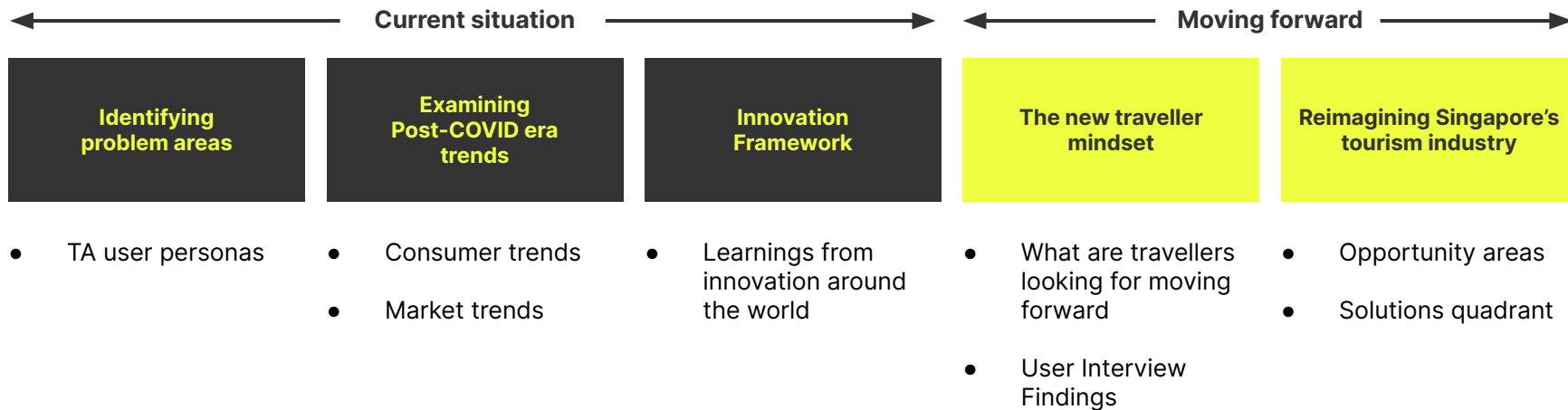


COVID-19 caught the world by surprise in 2020 and still provokes devastating consequences up until today. The impact on the Travel and Tourism industry is prominent. Fortunately, there are always opportunities that emerge during a challenging time.

*As stated by the World Travel Tourism Council: "People's desire to travel remains strong and was further strengthened by the various lockdowns and inability to see loved ones, with the pandemic ultimately highlighting the value the Travel & Tourism sector to the global economy. As the sector recovers, it is important to learn from this crisis so it can be more resilient in the future."*

**This market & user research aims to showcase inspiring international examples within the sector, apprehend the future to adjust the present and provide concrete guidance for Singapore professionals to recover and grow from this experience.**

# Content Overview



# Identifying Problem areas

A dramatic, high-contrast black and white photograph of a stormy sky. Dark, heavy clouds fill the frame, with a bright, jagged lightning bolt striking down from the upper right towards the center. The overall mood is intense and turbulent, serving as a visual metaphor for identifying problem areas.

# INBOUND TRAVEL AGENT

## About

Makes arrangements for transport, accommodation, sightseeing, entertainment, and other tourism related services for foreign tourists arriving in Singapore. Works closely with agents in other countries to market and sell their Singapore travel packages.

## Examples of services provided

Cultural Tours | Attraction Tours | Hotel Reservations  
Business Events, ([Siam Express](#)) | Transportation Services  
Sports Experiences | MICE ([World Express](#))

## Goals & Need

- Need to achieve revenue goals by differentiating themselves, offering unique selling points, and offering larger quantities of IB tours
- Need to attract talent, retain newcomers, and train and re-skill staff
- Want to move from reacting to market changes toward more strategic planning
- Want to provide good customer service with quick turnarounds for queries
- Want to have a database on Singapore's offerings

## Motivations

Aims to achieve revenue goals by providing tourists with the absolute best that Singapore can offer and fulfil memorable travel experiences for every visitor

## Frustrations

- Customers have varied, frequent, and demanding requests
- Challenging to attract and retain talent due to undesirable ("unglam") perception of the sector and stressful work environment
- Inadequate support system to cater to larger quantities of IB tours (e.g. urban planning for tourist destinations, insufficient foreign language tour guides and bus drivers)
- Technology
  - Customers expect fluid and personal interactions
  - Technology solution providers lack IB knowledge and are unable to meet IB TAs needs
  - More matured staff exhibit inertia to new tech
- Not able to take proactive steps due to need to react to changes in the sector frequently
- Increased competition from OTAs
  - Travellers' perception that there is nothing much to do and preference to plan their own itinerary

"(The customer) will text the group chat and ask before going to USS: "How any water bottles to bring?" They will ask me "I'm at Orchard MRT, what can I eat? What can I do?"

"If STB is giving out a lot of English and Mandarin licenses, but not the other languages, there are a lot of jobs the guides cannot take up."

"Sometimes, our suppliers, our vendors they try to steal business from us. They will give name card to the customer. There's no fault in getting people to refer you but they should be more efficient, work closer with the travel agencies."

"We had to face with 2 perceptions: the fact that many think there is nothing to do in Singapore and 2, that it's very easy to do things in Singapore, don't need to get a guide."



**STB may wish to drive active business value proposition design amongst Inbound Travel Agents**

Challenges	Suggestions towards overcoming (from participants / Asia Insight)
<b>Innovation</b> The IB sector <b>lacks sufficient differentiators and unique selling points</b> to set it apart from others, as the sector's strengths are factors external to the individual companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• STB may wish to provide assistance to the sector in <b>identifying their key value proposition and re-inventing their business models</b>, via consultation sessions and training workshops.</li><li>• STB may <b>include the business transformation resources as workbooks during workshops and consultation sessions</b>, as a record of the learnings after training that travel agents can refer to later with greater clarity.</li><li>• <b>Information / databases on Singapore's offerings that are frequently updated</b> may also help IB to keep up and update their products accordingly.</li></ul>
<b>Manpower</b> <b>Negative perceptions of the industry coupled with stressful work environment</b> made it difficult for IB to recruit and retain talents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• STB can provide support in terms of campaigns and recruitment drives for the travel agents, to <b>alleviate the negative perceptions associated to the industry</b>.</li><li>• STB may provide <b>consultations</b> for IB sector to manage customer demands; <b>sector-wide effort can be made to develop an app</b> to service customers, taking everyone's experience into the design.</li></ul>
<b>Business Expansion</b> <b>Insufficient foreign speaking guides and tour bus drivers</b> limit IB sector's potential to open up new markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Efforts to be made to <b>build up these supporting industries</b> (e.g. tour bus driver, trained foreign language guides, license approval process for foreign language guides), so that the sector can tap on opportunities when it arises.</li></ul>

# OUTBOUND TRAVEL AGENT

## About

With their extensive industry experience and contacts, the OB travel agent offers tour packages for Singaporeans to travel all over the world.

## Examples of services provided

Package tours | Cruises

Themed Customised tours ([Chan brothers](#))

Non-quarantine destination packages ([Super travels](#))

## Goals & Need


- Needs to offer customers unique tour packages at good deals
- Wants to focus more on travel consultancy and customised itinerary planning
- Wants better collaboration with airlines to obtain better deals for their customers
- Wants to attract newcomers to the industry

## Motivations

Increase profit margins - by innovating to tackle fierce competition and expanding into new markets to widen customer reach (attract new customers and retain loyalty from existing customers)

## Frustrations

- Vulnerable to disasters and epidemics
- Unregulated competition from overseas events companies, taxi uncles and social groups
- Fierce competition from OTAs
  - FITs go directly to suppliers to plan their own trips
  - OTA (e.g. Agoda) prices cannot be beat
- OB agents no longer obtain special rate for bulk purchases of airline seats for their customers
- Newcomers expect a high salary and travel opps, driving them to become freelance agents
- Smaller players are unable to keep up with tech adoption, because of high maintenance cost and perceived low returns of investment.
- Strict bank regulations such as payment process



*"Events companies and even taxi uncles and dance classes are competitors, they start gathering people to go on trips together. We try to feedback to tourism boards to curb competition from taxi drivers... But the response is slow."*

*"We checked the inventory there were enough seats. But SQ only gave 30 seats and block out the other seats but marked up seat prices."*

*"The design thinking toolkit is useful as we have to stop and rethink our business. Implementation is challenging though - as it requires buy-in and effort from the company to transform together."*

### OB agents may be encouraged to turn the threat from grey suppliers into opportunities for market outreach

Challenges	Suggestions towards overcoming (from participants / Asia Insight)
<b>Innovation</b> With technology development, airlines have moved towards direct-selling via their own platform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>STB may wish to <b>bring the various parties together</b> to discuss and arrive at win-win situations for all parties involved.</li> <li>Understanding <b>motivations from airlines to offer competitive rates / bulk purchase discounts to OB agents</b> may help to shed light on alternatives and workarounds possible</li> </ul>
<b>Manpower</b> Misconception of newcomers, thinking that their job meant a lot of overseas travel opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OB sector may wish to take this as opportunity to <b>send staff overseas to open up new markets and design new products</b> for the company.</li> <li><b>Recce of tourist attractions</b> can help to build better knowledge of the destination and be an edge in the selling and promotion of destinations.</li> </ul>
<b>Business Expansion</b> Increasing competitions from unlicensed sellers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OB sector could consider <b>partnering with these sellers to widen market outreach and tap into their customer database</b> while offering business opportunities for these sellers.</li> </ul>



# TRAVEL MANAGEMENT COMPANY

## About

TMCs - with their wide network and experience, help their clients organize the [travel process](#); view, track, and report on all travel spend; setting up travel policy or access discounted rates usually unattainable by the layman.

## Examples of services provided

'One-stop-shop' travel management - Business & Leisure travel, MICE, travel reporting, 24/7 service ([Safe2Travel](#), [Pegasus](#)) | Custom solutions e.g group tours, free & easy packages ([global travel](#))

## Goals & Need


- Leverage innovation in big data and insights to improve customer service, sales & marketing efforts to keep an edge over competition.
- Collaborate with other local TMCs to create synergies.
- Global alliance to expand business outreach at scale
- Unified training programs to avoid redundancy.

## Motivations

Continually serve and delight their customers, TMCs aim to remain competitive locally and even globally through the adoption of technology, reskilling staff and global partnerships.

## Frustrations

- Clients booking directly from suppliers (e.g. airlines)
- Data privacy & security concerns create distrust between local TMC companies.
- Increasing competition from local and global TMCs with strong financial background & regional presence
  - Poaching talent from local TMCs.
- Lack of training courses for job functions result in redundant skill sets.
- Hard to get new local-hires as they gravitate towards big global names.
- Older staff resist technology.



*"When the foreign TMCs come in... they target those people (local talents) with regards to staffing."*

*"This is what we plan to do, to be different from our peers and competition. Technology, AI, big data... Now we are building up our data"*

*"But everybody is saying – it's my data. I'm not going to work with you!"*

*"It's an even bigger challenge, because why should I join you? why don't I join a bigger company?"*

### STB may wish to provide support for TMC to expand into other markets / partner with global TMCs

Challenges	Suggestions towards overcoming (from participants / Asia Insight)
<b>Innovation</b> Some TMCs gave up to compete on technology due to the financial muscle of tech giants and OTAs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>STB may wish to <b>facilitate data-sharing among local TMCs</b> by promoting the benefits and alleviating the concerns that TMCs may have.</li> <li><b>Workshops and consultations</b> may be given to <b>provide alternative viewpoints on how to tap on technology</b> without going head-to-head with tech giants.</li> </ul>
<b>Manpower</b> Poaching of talents by global TMCs as they set up office in Singapore.  Lack of re-skilling and training courses relevant to TMCs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TMCs may consider to <b>partner with global TMCs</b> to provide regional support required by the global TMCs.</li> <li>STB may consider to look into the courses available and <b>design / promote relevant courses for TMC agents</b>, to address the redundancy issue faced when TMCs adopt new technology in their work.</li> </ul>
<b>Business Expansion</b> Competition heating up in Singapore as the market becomes oversaturated with TMCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To continue supporting businesses, <b>local TMCs may wish to expand outwards</b> into the region, widening their support and capability into a regional scale.</li> <li>This may <b>help TMCs to retain customers who are growing bigger</b> by having presence in their growing markets, while also opening up new markets previously unexplored.</li> <li>STB may <b>provide support and funding</b> for TMCs to take the first step towards regional growth.</li> </ul>

# TOUR OPERATORS

## About

Tour operators are responsible for organising and preparing holiday tours. They follow trends in the popularity of destinations and packages, and adjust company plans accordingly. Tour operators negotiate with suppliers of tourism products and provide the best possible price for the tourist.

## Motivations

To build a strong brand reputation and expand customer base to increase trust and outreach through more distribution channels and reduce reliance on OTA.

## Goals & Need

- Needs to build brand reputation and trust with consumers
- Maintain a competitive advantage to differentiate exclusive offerings that are not easily replicated
- Needs to drive awareness and traffic to their website to increase direct conversion rates
- Needs to expand into new customer segments or overseas market
- Be nimble to provide for customization

There are currently 30 tour operators in Singapore. With the COVID-19 changes, to plan to focus on domestic tourism and encourage Singaporeans to explore their own backyard.

## Examples of services provided

Sunset tour by Hello Singapore Tours: Coordinating the booking of transport, attraction tickets and meals.  
Chinatown Puzzle Hunt: The King's Feast tour by Monster Day Tour: Planning of treasure hunt game, places to go within the stipulated duration, wet weather plans and route

## Frustrations

- Difficulty in attracting and retaining talents due to negative perception
- Unable to compete on price due to low economies of scale to meet minimum and maximum orders
- Inefficient effective distribution channels led to over-reliant on OTA charging higher commission
- Difficulty in tracking where their leads are from
- Easily replicated by competitors (licensed and unlicensed) and FIT

*"Someone else could also copy because we don't really have much hold on the Intellectual Property. Doesn't take too much time unless you keep a hold on your reputation to prevent people from looking for someone else."*

*"Economies of scale is quite low, so our prices have to be high, low volume... it's chicken and egg right, you do that to cover your cost, but then nobody wants to take."*

*"We also have this case where this customer has been with us for 4 years. Then suddenly on the 5th year, they suddenly say I only want this part."*

**Consultation for TOs on possible distribution channels, and core value proposition to tackle “copycats”**

Challenges	Suggestions towards overcoming (from participants / Asia Insight)
<b>Innovation</b> Ease of replication of tours provided by TOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instead of selling tours, <b>TOs may need to think on the value-add</b> that they can offer to the customers, to complement and accentuate the experience.</li><li>• Consultations and workshops for TOs to <b>understand and build their brand around a core value proposition</b>, so that they may diversify and reduce risk.</li></ul>
<b>Manpower</b> Negative perceptions of the industry made it difficult for TO to recruit talents. New-hires frequently left the company after learning the trick of the trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• STB can provide support in terms of campaigns and recruitment drives for the travel agents, to <b>alleviate the negative perceptions associated to the industry</b>.</li><li>• STB may wish to provide guidelines and strategies for TOs to assist in staff retention.</li></ul>
<b>Business Expansion</b> Lack of tools to track effectiveness of various distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• STB may include <b>tracked links and/or QR codes in their materials</b> to allow data-gathering and assist Tour Operators in making more informed decisions on marketing and investment efforts.</li><li>• <b>Education of Tour Operators on their marketing and outreach efforts</b>, to provide guidance and suggestions for more effective distribution of their tours.</li></ul>



# Examining post-COVID era trends

Consumer insights and market trends  
that will shape the next normal

# Examining post-COVID era trends



## Consumer trends

New consumer behaviours to keep in mind  
when innovating for the new normal



# CONSUMER TRENDS

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The COVID-19 pandemic has swept across the entire world and upturned the lives of many. With the profound impact on our lifestyles, there have been **changes to the needs, wants, and concerns of our consumers.**

Here are the main trends that are likely to persist even when the COVID-19 days are behind us.

1.  
**Changing Work Habits**

2.  
**Investment in the self**

3.  
**Shifting Values**

# CHANGING WORK HABITS

Due to the pandemic, millions of people were abruptly forced to work from home. However, even as remote working is no longer compulsory, companies have started to embrace the adoption of remote working.

In response to this large shift in working conditions, consumers' habits are also changing.



## Increased adoption of remote work

Before the pandemic, only 7% of USA employees were given the option to work remotely. Today, many more employers are [putting in place remote work policies](#).

## Dawn of the “Third Space”

Most consumers would like to [occasionally work from a “third space”](#) — a location other than their home or place of employment, and are willing to pay for it

## Interest in blending work and vacations

74% of USA employees would consider [taking a working vacation](#) and many have started doing so. This has also led to Increased consumer interest in longer-term holidays.

# INVESTING IN THE SELF

## INVESTING IN THE SELF

### INVESTING IN THE SELF

Examining post-COVID era trends - **Consumer trends**

With the pandemic, countries around the world have been put into lockdowns and millions of people have been **forced to slow down** - leading to an worldwide period of **self-introspection** and **self-improvement**.



### Increased focus on self-care & mindfulness

Mental wellness is increasingly important to consumers. Their [interest in self-care reached an all-time high](#) during the pandemic, and they are weaving mindfulness in their daily rituals and consumption to better cope with stress.



### Growing interest in cooking and baking

During the lockdown, there was a [surge in interest in kitchen appliances](#) and increase in purchase of ingredients. 40% of consumers have also been [cooking most meals from scratch](#).



### Increased interest in language-learning

Within a few weeks after lockdowns, a whopping [30 million people have started learning a new language](#) on Duolingo. This spike in new learners was 2x the size of the spike during the 2020 New Year.



### Shift toward working out at home

Physical fitness remains important to many, but the mode in which consumers choose to do so has changed. 76% of consumers switched to exercising at home during the pandemic, and [66% say they now prefer exercising at home](#) instead.

# SHIFTING VALUES

## SHIFTING VALUES

### SHIFTING VALUES

With the upheaval of their everyday lives and increased time and energy to look inward and engage in greater self-introspection, consumers have been **re-evaluating their priorities** to determine **what is really important to them in life.**



#### **Increased value placed on purpose and social good**

One third of consumers strongly agree that they will reappraise the things that they value most and not take things for granted. More than 25% of consumers are [paying greater attention to what they consume and the impact that it has.](#)



#### **Increased attention paid to health and certainty**

Travellers are [spending more to minimise contact with public.](#) Some travellers also spend more for greater certainty by buying multiple trips over the same time period in case one of them falls through.



#### **Increased need for human connection**

Consumers [seek more human connection in customer service.](#) Around 40% of consumers felt that speaking to a live agent was the determining factor for successful customer service interaction. Consumers also [sought connection through social media platforms while on quarantine.](#)

# Examining post-COVID era trends



## Market Trends

A look at how the tourism industry is slowly shifting,  
and what tools are available in the market today



## Mega Trends Shaping the Future of Tourism

The way of travelling is constantly evolving to cater to the changing needs and wants of travellers, especially since the pandemic. Market trends inform overarching travelling styles that are happening around the world.



Trend #1  
**Domestic Tourism**

Trend #2  
**Spontaneous Tourism**

Trend #3  
**Sustainable Tourism**

Trend #4  
**Wellness Tourism**



## Key recovery in the tourism sector

- Although international tourism has started to open up since showing signs of rebound in June and July 2021, the outlook still remains largely uncertain, [destinations around the world are taking proactive steps to grow domestic tourism.](#)
- UNWTO foresees international travels recovery to pre-crisis levels not expected before 2023
- More countries have taken steps to grow domestic tourism to stimulate demand, including marketing efforts and financial incentives.



MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,  
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT  
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

## 2020 support - Tourism Recovery Package



Australian Government  
Australian Trade and Investment Commission

## Recovery for Regional Tourism Program

Tourism boards in countries such as [New Zealand](#) and [Australia](#) have injected funds to provide support to TAs to spur demand into domestic destinations.

### Short-notice travels

- Due to uncertainty, TAs are seeing a [rise in last minute bookings](#). This would mean a shorter lead time for TAs to engage travellers and lesser time to confirm logistics arrangements.
- For US travellers, 72% of all mobile bookings made happen within a 48-hour window prior to the booking.
- [Mobile-first](#) is now the preferred way to travel. Companies that do not have a mobile presence will lose out.



[Pack Up + Go](#) provides surprise vacation itineraries, designed to simultaneously remove the stress associated with planning a trip, while providing a sense of spontaneity for their clients.

### Minimising negative effects on the environment

- Four in five people (82%) said the pandemic has made them want to travel more responsibly in the future
- Travellers believe travel should support local communities and economies; travel should [preserve a destination's cultural heritage](#); and travel should [protect the planet](#).
- [Reducing carbon footprint and 'zero waste' travels](#) are some examples of sustainable travel trends that are arising from this pandemic.



[Greenkayak](#), is letting travellers kayak for free on a number of Europe's rivers and lakes—as long as they pick up any garbage they find along the way

[Intrepid Travel](#) offers drinking water for guests to fill their own reusable bottles where possible on all of its itineraries.



## Devotion to personal care

- [Wellness tourism](#) is defined as “travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one’s personal wellbeing”
- Global market for Wellness Tourism is projected to grow at [CGAR 6.6% over the period 2020-2027](#)
- The aging boomer generation wants to live longer, and the millennial generation puts good health at top priority.
- There has been an [increased focus on mental health awareness in Singapore](#) arising from the pandemic.



[The Sharpham Trust Woodland Retreat](#) is a place to draw people back.

[The Fair Oak Farm](#) organises wellbeing retreats which include yoga, pilates, gentle exercises and massage, together with vegetarian food and peaceful strolls at the Sussex countryside.

## **Tools that shape the evolution of tourism industry**

There has been significant changes to the way travellers explore the world with digital advancements. Since the pandemic, three main trends are observed in the tools that travels use, to provide a more holistic travel experience.

1.  
**Health & Safety Support**

2.  
**Unfiltered Travel Guides**

3.  
**Contactless Technology**



- With the uncertainty from this pandemic, travellers are in need of more security around their own personal safety and health.
- It is no longer just from crime protection.
- The travel industry needs to be reliable based on their ability to deliver safe and smooth travel environments and experience to travellers.



### **Streamline and [digitise contact center](#)**

Enable self-service for high volume requests, such as, for customers to make changes or cancellations easily through digital channels.

### **Human-like conversation from A.I. chatbots**

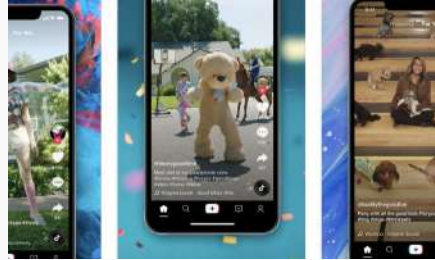
Efficiently [respond to queries](#) on the most updated COVID regulations, safety and/ or hygiene measures.

### **Rise of telehealth service**

Consider incorporating [telehealth services](#) to its product offering and streamline the experience for travellers



- **Travellers want authentic travel moments.**
- For the millennials, [life is all about the experiences](#), they use social media for travel inspirations.
- [Online travel reviews](#) continue to be traveler's reliable source of travel guides and would influence their choice of bookings.



## Showing the reality

There has been a new trend in [Tik Tok](#) users to follow travel tips given by travellers to show the actual experience. Such as, showing how hard to climb up Koko Head Trail in Oahu, Hawaii, instead of just the expected beautiful shots at the top.

## Navigate the world with explorers

The [Streetlife app](#) offers a library of crowdsourced travel guides. These are videos that give insights into neighbourhood happenings, unique and unspoken areas.

- With the increasing focus on personal safety, building in technology to reduce human contacts by **automating travel and related processes also save time, reduce cost and create a more seamless travel experience and help businesses save cost in the long run.**
- Contactless technology includes contactless payments, voice search, mobile solutions which are already in our personal lives, so it makes sense for tourism to follow the same pattern.



### Interacting with robots

[Yoyo the robot in Changsha](#), Hunan Province showed tourist around and gave a brief introduction on the scenic spot.

### Reaching out to travellers

[Jenny's Shanghai Tour Live Stream](#) reaches overseas tourists through tours conducted in English language.

### Virtual private tours

Tour operator [andBeyond](#) offers live stream wildlife footage in private zoom sessions where viewers can chat and ask questions to guides. The fee is then donated to the Africa Foundation.

# Innovation Framework

Learnings from innovation around the world,  
in the tourism industry and beyond

The overarching theme in effective innovation is to improve on or create new products and services, by **meeting an unmet user need.**

Analysing some innovation examples around the world, we identified some innovation approaches to employ in the new normal, and ways to engage the consumer.

## Types of Approaches

### 1. Leverage Tech & Digitisation

- Utilise AR / A.I. / VR
- Turn an existing service digital

### 2. Pivot Business Model

- Diversify product offerings
- Creative use of existing assets / resources
- Explore collaborations

### 3. Improve Marketing Strategy

- Reconsider distribution channels
- Creative use of content creation
- Sharpen marketing communication
- Explore collaborations

## Engaging the Consumer

### Tap into passions and interests

- Offer users what they like
- Explore gamification
- Contribute to a social cause

### Usability and convenience

Make product/services easy to access and use, especially in the post-COVID era

### Enhance social connections

Make the experience shareable, connect users to others

### Tackle user's pain point

Find out user's frustrations and offer a solution

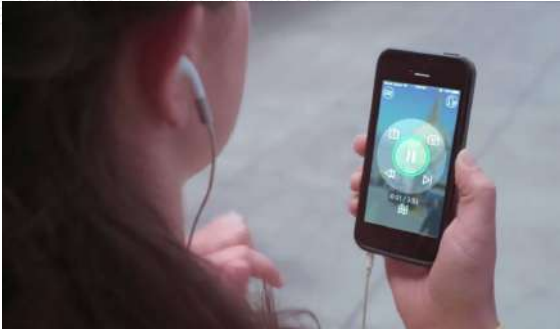
# Innovation Framework



Approach 1

## **Leverage Tech & Digitisation**

Going beyond standard virtual tours,  
utilising tech such as A.I. and AR.



### Audio tours

**Detour app:** An audio walking tour app that uses geolocation technology to immerse users more immediately in the rhythm of a neighborhood.

#### **Why it works: Usability and convenience**

Contactless but immersive tour experience in the COVID era and beyond.

**Opportunity:** "... solo business travellers will be willing to pay \$25 for the package of 10 tours even if they only have time for a single tour, because of the value of the experience, and because business travellers often return to the same cities."



### Remote-controlled guides

**Camera-wearing locals** at Faroe Island will respond to sight-seeing commands from people at home, allowing virtual tourists to control their own route.

#### **Engaging the consumer: Usability & Convenience**

Going one step further from basic virtual tours to offer user freedom of being able to control the view instead of just watching a pre-recorded tour

**Opportunity:** Explore gamifying a remote-controlled tour experience



### Augmented Reality

**World around me:** Location-based augmented reality app that brings Google Maps to life, so all you need to do is hold up your phone and the streets in front of you will be transformed with information about nearby facilities.

#### **Engaging the consumer: Usability & Convenience**

Lets user conveniently access information about nearby facilities.



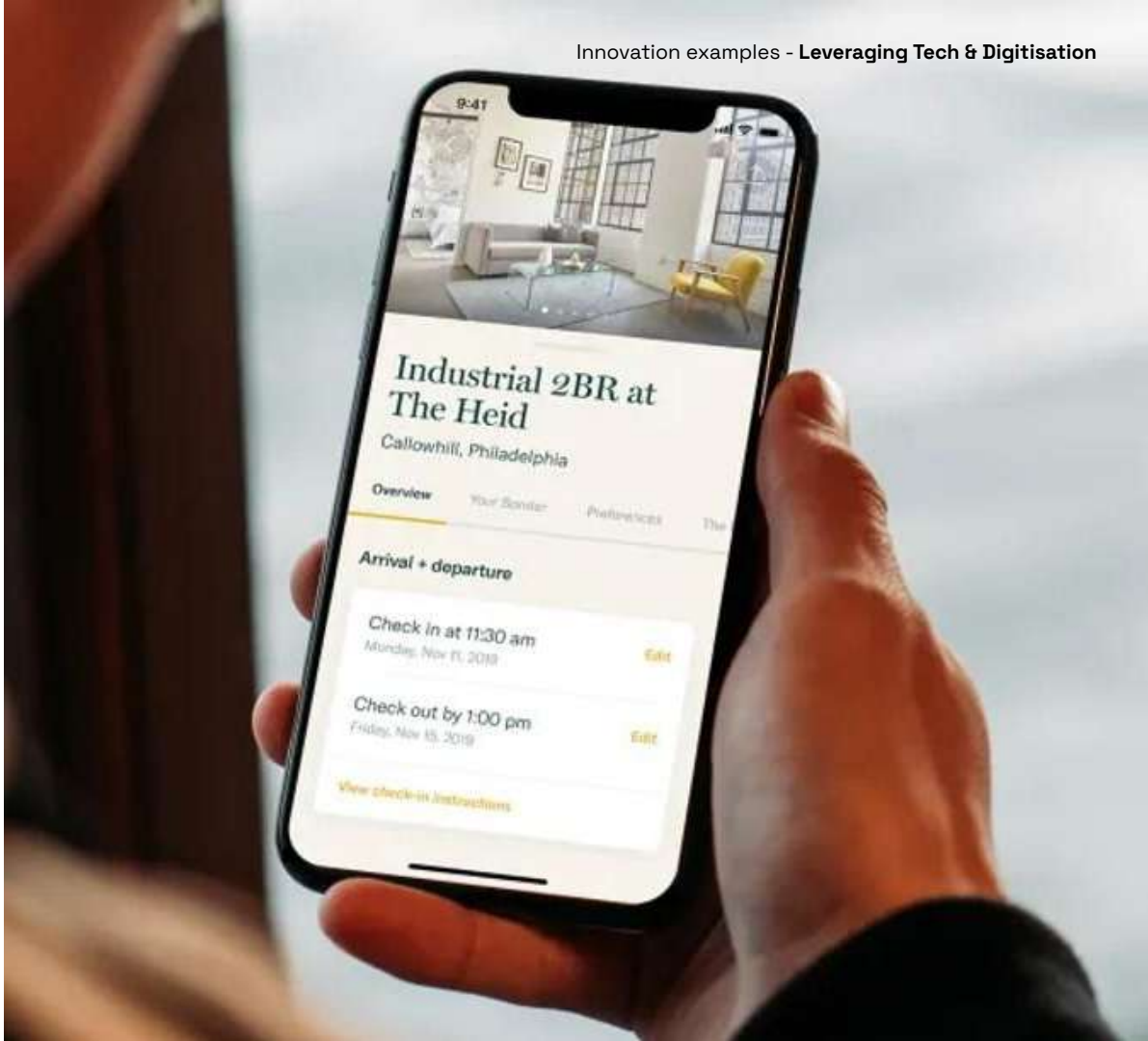
## Better customer service with A.I. Live transcripts

[Sonder](#) is a mobile-first hospitality service that provides quick 24/7 digital support for customers.

It utilises **Salesforce Service Cloud Voice with Amazon Connect** to help them focus on **not only improving the guest experience, but also how to reduce the cognitive burden for their representatives** with real-time transcription.

Natural language processing from Amazon Web Services (AWS) paired with Einstein AI transcribes calls live and connects the transcript data to guide agents through processes, answers, workflow, and even automation.

**Opportunity:** IB agents can consider utilising tech to respond to frequent customer requests





## Like Siri for travel

Users can verbally ask or type in their travel wishes and the app will display a number of itinerary options including airfare and hotels. The [platform](#) also makes it possible to invite others to join in the same itinerary for group travel.

### Why it works: Usability & Convenience

Leverages A.I. Assist Automation to Improve booking experience for TMCs and users, freeing up agents to devote time to more complex and service-oriented tasks.

**Opportunity:** Utilise tech to create personalised tour packages for travellers.



## Combat traveller confusion

[Skyscanner](#) created a simple-to-use [interactive global map](#) to provide up-to-date information on where travellers can visit internationally, and related entry requirements

It sought to help travellers answer questions about Covid-19 guidelines and border restrictions and used A.I. triggers to deliver personalized emails to customers when there was a relevant change in border restrictions or quarantine information.

### Engaging the consumer: Tackle user's paint point

of having to navigate the fast-changing international travel landscape.

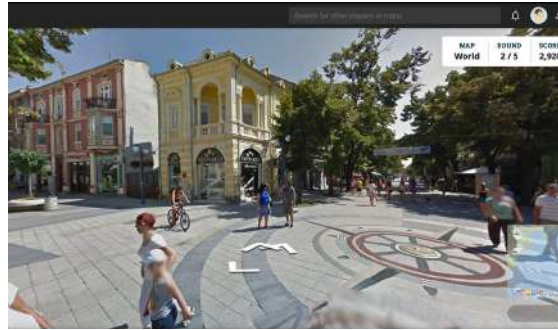


## Sentosa

The circuit breaker measures mean people cannot visit any places of interest. But in Animal Crossing: New Horizons (ACNH), they [can now explore Sentosa - virtually.](#)

### Engaging the user: Passions and interests

Tapped into the fact that the game had become a huge hit globally while people were stuck at home, building brand love and top-of-mind awareness when lockdown eases.



## Geoguessr

When Geoguessr came out in 2013, it was positively received and popular, but it's experienced an [upsurge in visibility during the pandemic](#). An increasing number of streamers started broadcasting their games as homebound followers craved a digital escape.

**Opportunity:** gamify a virtual travel tour to keep users engaged, as opposed to pre-recorded tours.

E.g. solve puzzles among friends using remote control tour guides in another country



## Kelowna Hotel

Kelowna Hotel & Suites noticed younger guests looking for things to do during their stay, so they partnered with technology company QuestUpon to create an [interactive experience](#) for children.

The game takes them on a geocaching adventure through the Kelowna hotel and courtyard, navigating to various missions, tasks and mini-games.

**Engaging the user: Tackles pain point**  
of parents finding it challenging to keep children engaged on holidays

# Innovation Framework



Approach 2

## **Pivot Business Model**

A look at how companies are finding new ways to generate revenue in the new normal

## Swedish hotel turns its rooms into pop-up restaurants

The [hotel](#) offered rooms as personal pop-up restaurants during the pandemic for guests who want a private dining space without having to encounter crowds.

### Why it works: Tackles pain point

Addresses user need of wanting to dine out without encountering crowds in restaurants



# DIVERSIFY PRODUCT OFFERINGS

Innovation examples - **Pivot Business Model**

Klook and Airbnb diversified their product offering by **offering home-based experiences**.



## Klook home

Travel booking platform Klook launched a new service offering almost 200 [home-based experiences](#) such as do-it-yourself craft and cooking kits, online workshops, and free virtual tours.

### Engaging the consumer: Tap into passions and interests

According to Klook's search data, about 60% of the total number of searches across Asia Pacific and Europe are related to domestic experiences, indicating rising local interest in them.



## Airbnb online experiences

Hosts can now offer [online events](#) focused on cooking, meditation, art therapy, magic, songwriting, virtual tours, and many other activities, with users joining for a modest fee.

### Why it works: Becoming a full-range lifestyle platform

Airbnb could become a platform that people use not just to arrange their next vacation **but to develop a cosmopolitan mindset throughout the year**, learning about other cultures from a distance and celebrating the diversity of the world on a daily basis.



# DIVERSIFY PRODUCT OFFERINGS

## 2. Innovation examples - Pivot Business Model

Travel agencies in Malaysia **pivoted to e-commerce** while a Seattle-based tour guide **monetised her sewing and cooking skills**.



### Malaysia's Travel Agencies

**Apple Vacations** started selling premium fruits from Japan, Korea and Australia, gifts and tidbits from Japan, and Japanese wagyu beef and dried scallops.

**Umrah and Haj Travel Agencies association** launched an online marketplace in January to sell dates imported from Saudi Arabia, perfumes, fresh poultry, cakes and even plots of land to generate new sources of income.

**Why it works: Taps into consumer interests**  
of shopping for international products



### **Sarah Murdoch**

Seattle-based tour guide Sarah Murdoch started sewing and [selling travel-themed masks](#), and started cooking demonstrations for her 50,000 Facebook followers in a series she called "Cucina Quarantena."

That led to a Patreon page, where devoted fans could pay for additional content, like live walking tours around Italy.

**Why it works: Taps into consumer interests**  
of content consumption and bespoke mask designs

# DIVERSIFY PRODUCT OFFERINGS

## 2. Innovation examples - Pivot Business Model

Two examples of companies creating new product offerings while **contributing to a social cause.**



### Milwaukee Food & City Tours

This tour company [collaborated with local businesses](#) to create unique gift boxes, known as [Shelter-in-Style kits](#), with the flavors of Milwaukee delivered right to the consumer's doorstep.

These kits vary from baked goods and fudge classics to an interactive Halloween box **providing the buyer with interactive stories, a costume contest and haunted trivia to enjoy in their own homes.**

**Why it works:** Taps into consumer interest of supporting local businesses during a time of need, and gamifying the experience to make it more engaging



### Great Plains Tours

A new range of conservation expeditions in Botswana created that [involve travellers in data collection which will contribute to future conservation efforts.](#)

Travellers will count elephants and other wild animals on tour and use DNA collection kits, pattern analysis tools and software to identify leopard and painted dogs.

**Why it works:** A unique experience that allows travellers to support meaningful conservation work while on tour.

# Innovation Framework



Approach 3

## **Improve marketing strategy**

Reconsider distribution channels for existing products and services, explore collaborations, and creative use of content creation

# RECONSIDER DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Innovation examples - Improve Marketing Strategy

Two companies found a different way to distribute their service during a time of social distancing



## Bringing workshops to homes

Wocation, a tour agency that promotes mental health through craft workshops and group counselling [brought its workshops - which includes cooking and ceramic classes - to people's doorsteps.](#)

"Crafts are used by some people to heal their minds, and that can be done at home, which also promotes social distancing,"

**Engaging the consumer: Usability & Convenience**



## Virtual dinner parties

Events catering company Chefinmykitchen found a new way to cater food in a time when physical social events were lacking, by creating a new service of [delivering food for Zoom dinner parties.](#)

**Engaging the consumer: Enhance social connections**

**A good way to simulate a reunion dinners for special occasions when social distancing measures are tightened**

**Opportunity:** Offer travel-themed international cuisine delivery for reunion dinners or food delivery to a virtual tour experience to spice things up



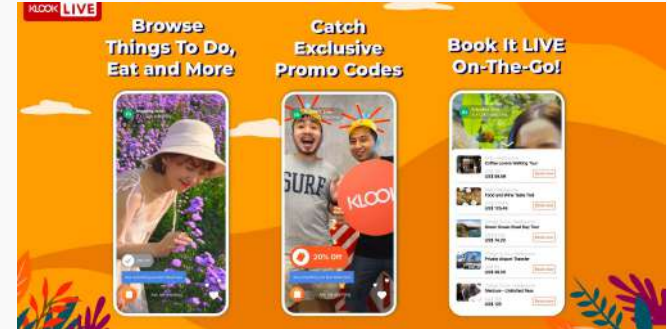
## Self-guided tours curated by locals

Street-Life app allows users to [discover local experiences created by locals](#) and use stop-by-stop navigation & video-guidance to self-explore cities like a local.

**Why it works:** Effective collaboration - real locals with valuable insights and knowledge

### Engaging the user: Usability & Convenience

Contactless connection between travellers with locals in the age of social distancing



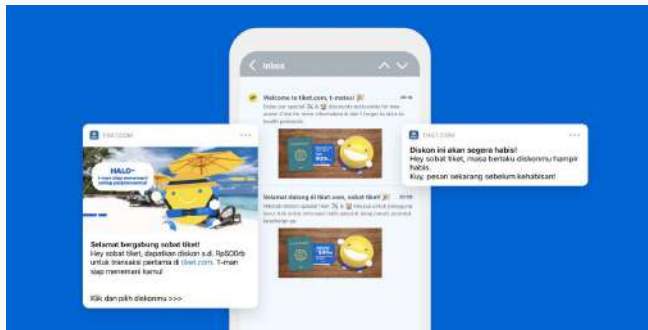
## Live-streaming

Klook Live [allows third-party tour and accommodation providers to reach Klook's wider audience directly](#) and sell them vacations and holidays via promotions and special offers – all enabled by a suite of accessible mobile tools.

Klook experience twice the number of conversions it enjoys from similar activity on Facebook Live, meaning new revenue in a difficult environment.

**Opportunity:** TAs to consider getting on Klook platform if they haven't already done so.





## Cross-channel Communication

Indonesia based OTA Tiket.com personalised customer interactions and [sent them targeted messages based on their journey milestone](#) via email, in-app messages, in-browser messages, and mobile push notifications.

**Why it works:** By maintaining the segmented and personalized messaging strategy throughout the customer journey, tiket.com kept their customer base engaged as they traveled through the customer lifecycle.



## Virtual Social Gatherings

The group travelling company, For the Love of Travel (FTLO Travel), has gotten creative with social distancing by creating online social gatherings with travellers from all over the world. [Participants mingle online and earn FTLO travel credits.](#)

**Why it works:** Builds brand love by keeping community engaged even when they cannot travel, and top-of-mind awareness when travel opens up with travel credits.

# The new traveller mindset

A black and white photograph of a man with short, dark hair, wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark shirt with a white geometric pattern. He is wearing a face mask with a repeating pattern of small, dark, stylized figures. He is looking out of a window, possibly on a train or bus, with a blurred background of trees and buildings.

What are the newly minted values and  
underlying of post-pandemic travellers?  
How will they approach travel from now on?

# The new traveller mindset



## Peace of mind

Travellers need to first and foremost feel safe  
travelling in today's uncertain climate

As travel - especially international travel slowly becoming a reality, travellers are excited to fulfil their pent-up wanderlust.

However, they are also cautiously optimistic about plans they have made, due to the uncertainty surrounding the ever changing travel and border restrictions and new strains of the Coronavirus, travellers must be prepared for any situation.

## 1. Health and Safety

- Health and hygiene concerns become top of mind for travellers
- Safety issues regarding increased racism (especially toward the asian community)

## 2. Renewed reliance on Travel Agents

- Renewed reliance on travel agents to navigate tedious COVID regulations

## 3. Flexible booking policies

- Travellers now demand flexible policies regarding bookings and refunds - to accommodate the ever changing travel restrictions



## Fear of Racism

With the increase of [reports of anti-Asian hate](#) across the world, many Asian travellers are feeling more vulnerable than ever - in their own neighborhoods and on the road. When they do travel, they opt for [bespoke, small-group tours with a driver and a guide to manage the experience](#).



## Health and Hygiene

### Accreditation for keeping a high standard

Travellers demand a high standard for hygiene and sanitation guidelines from travel providers - not satisfied with just a brand's promise of upholding these standards. They want to [see accreditation and experience them through customer service](#), and expect brands to be forthcoming in communicating these practices.

### A robust healthcare system in their travel destination.

Travellers, though excited for international travel again, are cautious about their health and safety. They need to be certain of their destination country's [healthcare system](#) - safety protocols, border control into and out of the country, as well as effective testing standards to track individuals.



## Mitigating uncertainty with Travel Agents

Travel Advisors/ Agents (TAs) are gaining the confidence of travellers once again - the same travellers that detracted in favour of online booking agencies before the pandemic hit.

As the pandemic rages on for over a year, and some travellers to date still struggle to get their refunds back, [the value of the Travel Agent quickly became apparent](#), their expertise and industry knowledge a life saver when travel plans go south.



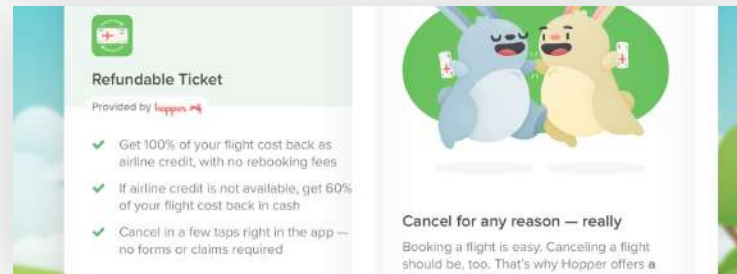
**Some travel providers have already caught on to this shift.**

## Wait and see, cancel and re-book

Uncertainty in travel manifests in two ways. On the one hand, we have travellers adopting a “wait and see approach,” delaying bookings, or opting for flexible tickets.

On the other, Eager travellers are [“trip stacking”](#), or adopting a [“book now and figure it out later”](#) mentality, implying that they miss travelling so much that they are willing to book a trip, or multiple - even if they might have to cancel it in the future.

All these point to travellers’ [demand for flexibility](#) - in changing booking dates, penalty-free cancellation and flexible presale bookings.



**Hopper**, a travel booking app, has seen an increase in the use of its services that allow people to cancel or rebook flights free of charge.

## Flexibility when flying: Delta expands change-fee waivers for new bookings, travel through 2020

**Airlines**, like **Delta** and **United**, have reintroduced flexibility for basic economy passengers, who would normally not normally be allowed to change their tickets.

# The new traveller mindset



## Seeking Meaningful Experiences

After being cooped up for 2 years, travellers are looking for more purposeful travel experiences to make up for time lost

# SEEKING MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES

The new traveller mindset

As the pandemic crosses the second year mark in three months time, a vast majority of people around the world spent it in isolation.

Within that time frame, there is a paradigm shift that is inward-looking - a shift towards self-care, wellness, and being intentional about consumption and our environmental impact.

This bodes over when it comes to travelling as well. There is a priority of rejuvenation, purpose-driven and prudence.

## 1. Reconnection & Rejuvenation

- Reconnecting with nature, with a preference for the wide outdoors
- A focus on mental wellbeing and rejuvenation

## 2. Purpose-driven Travel

- Travellers turn to 'Workations' blending remote work while experiencing foreign landscape and culture
- Rise in Diversity, Sustainability & supporting local
- Prioritizing human connections & appreciation of local culture

## 3. Intentional Spending

- Paring back on unnecessary expenditure, seeking out value-based leisure
- Spend on what is important



## Reconnecting with nature

The aftermath of endless months of cabin fever would be a [surge in a universal hunger for wide open spaces](#). For example in the US, there is a surge in visitors in state and national parks. This trend is to continue through this year too, as people turn towards nature as an escape from the bustle and stressors of city life.

There is a practical aspect of it too - with changing border restrictions, many travellers opt to visit nearby countries, or explore the wilderness and the vast outdoors in their own “backyard”.



## Improving overall wellbeing

Since the pandemic, focusing on [mental and physical well being](#) through elaborate self-care routines and being mindful in general was a huge trend in 2020.

As the borders open up, and travel now more accessible, there is a surge in ‘wellness’ trips where travellers see an opportunity to [splurge in the name of healing and improving mental wellbeing](#).





## 'Workations' gaining momentum

Remote work used to be associated with hippy tech upstarts of Silicon valley. However in the recent years, and not less because of the pandemic, it has become the defacto way of corporate life, as workers can function productively, [without being in the office](#).

Now, people are redefining remote working, combining the ubiquitous nature of work, done abroad - [embedding themselves for longer periods of time in a certain place](#).



## Diversity, Sustainability & supporting local

Consumers are becoming more conscious travellers, mindful of their impact on local communities. They seek out travel brands that closely align to their values.

In an [AMEX Trendex online poll](#) , a vast majority of travellers

- Choose an airline/ hotel that value diversity and inclusion
- Support travel brands that have [certifications](#) that they have **sustainability-friendly policies**
- Are passionate about travelling to destinations to help boost tourism revenue and the local economy.



## Forming human connections & appreciation of culture

Apart from being conscious travellers, consumers are also more intentional when it comes to planning their itinerary, as now there is much more risks involved in travelling. There is also a yearning for human connection.

Travellers now plan trips around [visiting loved ones abroad](#), seeking new encounters and forming [meaningful connections](#) with [local communities](#) in a safe and respectful way, learning about their culture, and leaving a positive footprint.

This contrast with the yesteryears of boring conventional travel experiences that are touch-and-go.

## Financial Insecurity & Seeking Value

The global pandemic has brought with it financial insecurity at both a personal and societal level. At times of economic uncertainty and slowdown, [consumers may pare back unnecessary expenditure.](#)

While people still want to enjoy leisure and holiday activities, there might be a trend to stay nearer home and **seek value-based holidays**, focused on **free** activities and **seeking out bargains**.

While this may be true, in line with their renewed focus on health and safety, travellers are also willing to [spend more on travel insurance and private transportation.](#)



**Opportunity  
area  
for  
travel  
agents**

A bright yellow square with the letters "WIP" in bold black font centered inside it.

**WIP**

**The remaining part of the deck is *WIP* now**

LOW EFFORT

HIGH VALUE

DO IT NOW

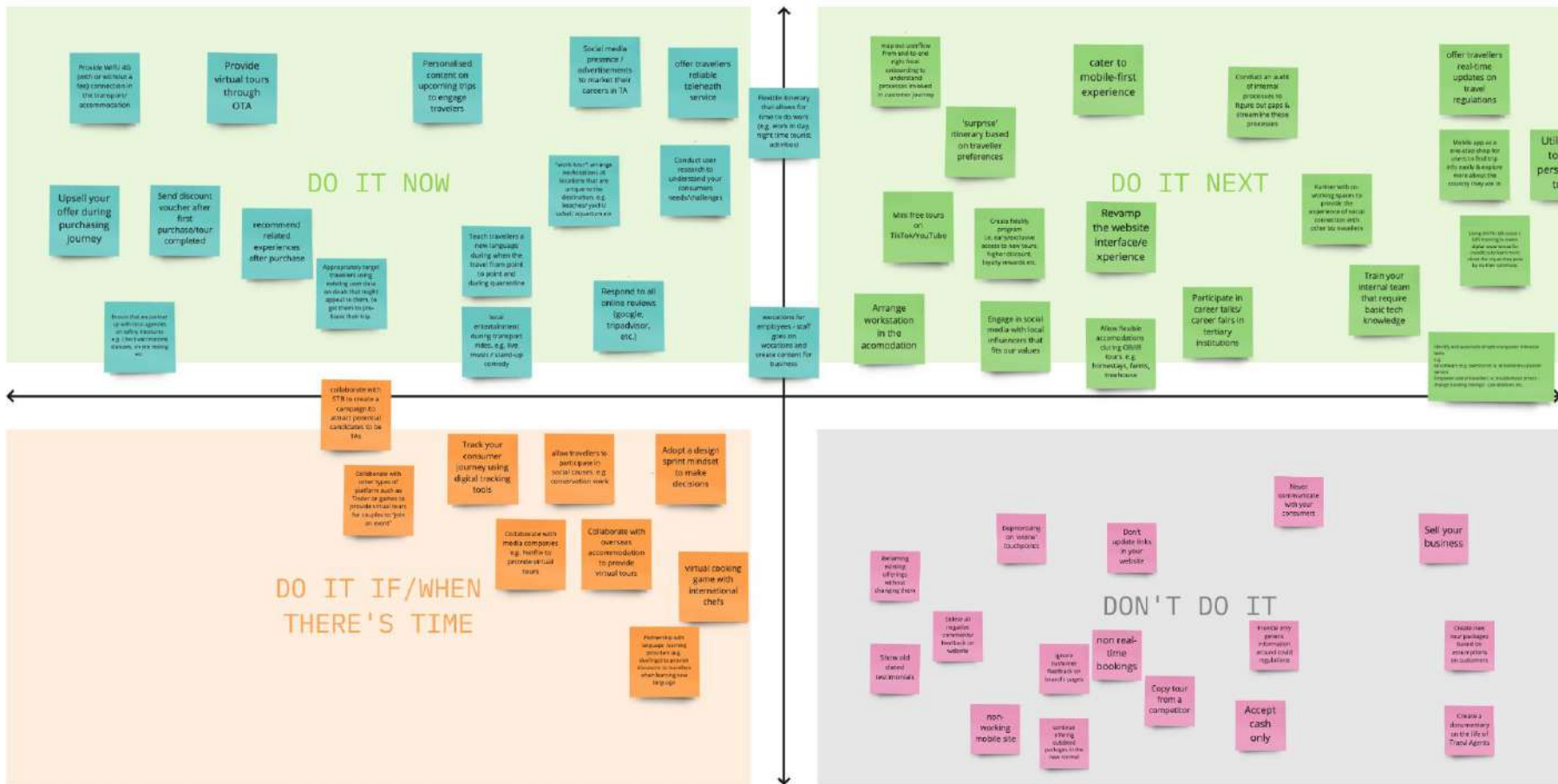
DO IT NEXT

DO IT IF/WHEN  
THERE'S TIME

DON'T DO IT

LOW VALUE

HIGH EFFORT





**Thank you**