

WHAT COMES NEXT

GUIDELINES TO REOPENING



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As we face the challenges presented by COVID-19 on a daily basis, at some point, everyone looks to the future and asks “When are we going to be able to leave our homes and re-engage with the world outside? How should we behave when it does?”

While restrictions and bans were seemingly enacted at great speed, it is unlikely they will be eased at the same pace. More likely, we will see a staged reduction over the course of several months with consumer behaviour lagging behind as different communities warily test the safety of reset boundaries. In our industry, we will likely see attendance at museums and exhibitions rebound ahead of cinemas, concerts and theatres given the ‘safe space’ and fewer shared, touchable surfaces afforded by such experiences. Given these benefits, we may see more people attracted to museums and exhibitions as their pent up demand for shared experiences is unleashed and other options are still seen as unviable. For this, we should prepare and be ready.

While each jurisdiction will carry its own rules, regulations and accepted practices to mitigate further contamination, there are a few areas we may address together that will facilitate the reopening of and encourage the general public to consider visiting our experiences.



LEGISLATION

- Follow all recommendations from government agencies and close the venue when prudent, not just when required. While governments may relax restrictions, doing so might cause a localized increase in infections forcing them to increase restrictions once again. Places seen to proactively protect its visitors will be better placed to establish public trust.
- It may be necessary to review and amend your contracts with service providers with your updated requirements ensuring the safety of visitors and staff. For example, within cleaning contracts, the use of specific alcoholic cleaning solutions or increased frequency of cleaning required for infectious disease control.
- Update your contact lists so that all contractor, catering and event staff information is up to date, in the case of infection tracking.



TICKETING

- Promote and incentivize advance online ticket purchases to reduce physical contact while also gathering visitor email addresses and phone numbers should contact-tracing be required at a later date.
- Disperse peak visitation throughout the day by limiting the number of tickets to allow for 1 visitor per 4 square meters of gallery space, perhaps by extending opening hours.
- Establish flexible ticket booking policies, perhaps including a waiver of change fees as well as a relaxing eligibility for refunds.
- Update ticketing terms and conditions (T&Cs) with your new conditions of entry.
- In ticket confirmation emails, include a friendly reminder of what visitors should bring and what to expect when they arrive.
- For those who may have already purchased tickets prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, set up a rebooking offer for visitors to exchange into a new session, so they book new tickets with the updated ticketing T&Cs. Depending on your ticketing system, this may require crediting to enable a new booking or offering a promotional code.
- Consider offering existing ticket holders a discounted additional ticket for a friend or even a free ticket to help cultivate word of mouth endorsement. For example, if the ticket holder shares their RSVP on social media (and if session availability allows it). Promoting attendance to your experience via shared media will demonstrate the public is trusting your brand to provide a safe environment.
- Similarly, consider offers to collaborators, artists and industry colleagues. Look to support the industry in whichever way possible, to strengthen your community at large.
- Consider exclusive entry and access periods for specific groups within your community. E.g. schools, senior citizens or special need groups.



VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Create and promote what a contactless visit can be from arrival, from ticket purchase, to temperature scans or checks on entry and exit. This may also require the removal or replacement of hands-on or “touch” activities from the experiences.
 - ◇ Consider converting interior mechanical doors to automatic doors, lock doors open, or use staff stationed at the entry of each area to open doors.
 - ◇ Set-up online merchandise sales / purchase via mobile while still on-site.
 - ◇ Remove luggage store or locker options for visitors and update your website and onsite signage accordingly.
- Create and promote what a socially distanced experience can be.
 - ◇ Put in place mechanisms for managed access into each area within the venue (entry foyer, box office, merchandise, gallery, toilets). For example, utilize physical barriers and queuing systems, staff to guide visitors and prominent signage to indicate how many people can enter the area.
 - ◇ Where queueing is required, use markings on the floor to indicate appropriate space between visitors in the queue. Narrow down queueing lines to minimise side by side grouping.
 - ◇ In F&B areas remove seating or reduce to 1 or 2 seats per table.
 - ◇ Use takeaway/disposable tableware where possible and increase emptying of waste bins.
- Pre order supplies for FOH and BOH areas; for example, tissues, hand sanitizers.
- Provide regular, visible best-practice cleaning / disinfection of communal areas.
- Develop and agree on a response plan in case a member of staff becomes ill with symptoms of COVID-19. This plan should include at least:
 - ◇ Identify a room or area where the staff member who is feeling unwell or has symptoms can be safely isolated.
 - ◇ Have a plan for how they can be safely transferred from there to a health facility.
 - ◇ Agree on the plan in advance with your partner healthcare provider or health department.
- Develop a contingency and business continuity plans for an outbreak in the community/area where your business operates; e.g. if public transport ceases to operate.



VISITOR COMMUNICATIONS

- To create a positive journey for the visitor, update your website and FAQs page with your new social distancing measures put in place. Include information on what visitors may need to bring for their visit and/or what is being provided, as well as your updated cleaning procedures.
- Encourage visitors to contact you with additional questions so you can assess what information might be missing from your FAQs page.
- Encourage all visitors to look out for one another by promoting good hand, cough and sneeze hygiene and providing the facilities to do so – everything from hand sanitizer stations to tissues and increased covered waste bins. You may even want to consider the distribution of face masks or gloves where appropriate.
- Use public communications and marketing opportunities, and display clear signs at the entrance doors to welcome visitors, advising them of the new measures you are taking to make the venue safe for visitors.
- Where possible, use creative, positive and engaging tone of voice in all signage. This can be another opportunity to promote your brand or consider thematically adapting signage to exhibitions.
- In your post event survey, include questions and feedback options regarding communication and management of the new safety measures put in place. Learn and adapt based on visitor feedback.
- Create new shareable video content to demonstrate how visitors can still visit the experience in a new way. Cultivating the perception of safety in your venue is in your control. Create visitor incentives to share stories about their time on site.



STAFF MANAGEMENT

- Update and distribute hygiene checklists, risk assessment/s and allocate roles and responsibilities to mitigate. This should be an ongoing team effort to capture items as small as the handling of keys or as serious as new First Aid procedures.
- It is crucial to train your staff on new operating procedures, and regularly ask for feedback to capture any growing concerns regarding safety or recommendations. Plan for certain operational aspects requiring specialized training, such as First Aid training and the inclusion of infectious disease control procedures.
- Be ready to make adjustments to operational procedures daily based on what is being learnt from visitor behaviour and staff comfort. Communicate these regularly.
- Where possible, look at changing procedures to minimise use of shared tools or stationery. For example, using an online HR Platform/Google Forms for staff timesheets.
- Ensure sufficient stock of personal protective equipment (PPE) as required and provide staff with additional uniforms to change each day. To avoid cross contamination, request staff to wash their own uniforms.
- Consider conducting daily 'Safety First' meetings with all members of exhibition staff to discuss their observations and recommendations from the front lines.
- Set up instant group messaging systems to all staff and send all staff communication early in preparation for re-open. Send regular communications on a daily basis to staff to begin with, until operations have stabilised.
- Set up additional staff BOH areas or adjust rosters so staff breaks are staggered.

To gain the public's confidence and acceptance, it is critical we effectively promote the above efforts and our focus on public health to the general public. Please share any additional measures you believe will encourage safe visitation so we may pass it along to our colleagues around the world.



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EXHIBITIONS

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