Planning for HOSPITALITY RECOVERY OPERATIONS

IN COLLABORATION WITH

HOSPA
The Hospitality Professionals Association

Institute of Hospitality
We Will Persevere

If someone had told me not that long ago that the global travel industry would face its greatest ever challenge in 2020, I would have been sceptical. After all, 2019 was a great year for travel, with solid growth across all sectors and a healthy outlook for the future. And yet here we are, in the midst of the worst global pandemic in living memory, struggling with massive disruption to our industry across every global region.

While we’re all facing tough decisions and uncertainty in the face of the current crisis, it’s important to remember that we as an industry will continue to persevere. We have faced difficult times in the past and may well have to face them again in the future, but the human spirit’s natural desire to further ourselves through new experiences will not be dominated by COVID-19 or any other setback we may face. Travel signifies progress, whether that is in the form of personal growth and fulfillment, new business opportunities, or any other driver. In parallel with other industries such as retail and food service, our ability to recover and reopen for business will help signify to the world the dominance of the human spirit and our ongoing support of global progress.

I hope the best practices and tips found within our Hospitality Recovery series can help jumpstart your organisation’s recovery and reopening efforts to once again make available to guests all that is great about this industry we collectively serve. I would like to wish yourself, your loved ones, and your team members the greatest of health and success as we continue to navigate these uncharted waters together.

Sincerely,

Francisco Pérez-Lozao Rüter
President, Hospitality
Amadeus IT Group
As hotels move from unprecedented lockdown

towards being lifted, the sense of excitement and optimism is palpable. What is clear to everyone is that a successful reopening, the start of the long journey back to being the exciting delightful organisations that we all know, will be absolutely dependent on processes that address the very real concerns that COVID-19 has left us with. Providing an environment that is safe both for our staff and guests, that both can feel safe in is of paramount importance.

Hospitality is not rocket science. It is, however a complicated and intricate set of processes and activities made more complicated by the fact that they are all interdependent and function 24/7. This eBook is a roadmap through reopening that highlights the steps that need to be taken to provide that safety that will, in turn, inspire confidence.

We face many challenges - how does social distancing sit well in a business whose success is about people being together? How will restrictions on travel impact our markets? We will meet these and many other challenges in the months ahead. But first we must be confident that we are meeting the absolute need for confidence in our ability to provide the safety that is demanded of us.

Here’s a clear, well thought out “how to” guide to help support your recovery efforts.

Sincerely,

Peter Duckett FIH
Chief Executive
Institute of Hospitality
As an industry, hospitality has been faced with a difficult few months.

It’s a period that even the most astute of forecasters couldn’t possibly have envisioned as we concluded 2019.

In the wake of upheaval and disruption the like of which we haven’t seen since the Second World War, we’ve been endeavouring to adapt and survive as much as possible. For many, this will have meant reinventing business models, some have offered their hotels to those in need, and others have had to close operations entirely. Whatever situation we’ve faced, we’ve had to react quickly in the most testing of circumstances.

Despite the overwhelming sense of gloom at the outset of the crisis as it emerged just how heavily impacted our industry would be, I’ve taken great hope and a real sense of optimism from the reaction of hospitality operators across the sector.

There will always be a need for the hospitality sector, and there will always be those there to meet that need, and as we look to reopen, this eBook will aim to provide guidance and advice, helping businesses to take the necessary steps to thrive in a post-COVID world.

Of course, while we’ve never been here before (unprecedented is a much-used word of late, but with good reason) we can take heart and direction from the experienced, calm-headed professionals for which hospitality is famed.

Although, likely to be much changed, our industry certainly won’t be undaunted by the challenges that face us.

Together, we’ll come through this crisis, stronger and more resilient.

Sincerely,

Jane Pendlebury
CEO HOSPA
The Hospitality Professionals Association
The challenges placed on the hospitality industry by COVID-19 will have a deep and lasting impact. Travel will not return at once. It will take time for people to feel comfortable and safe leaving their homes once again. As a result, it’s essential that hoteliers and operational teams around the world come together to enhance their business models and responsiveness in defining new, clear policies.

To help the industry plan for recovery, experts from Amadeus, The Hospitality Professionals Association (HOSPA), and Institute of Hospitality (IoH) partnered to produce two eBooks looking at the new trends and forces shaping hospitality. While we cannot offer exact answers for your property and business, we hope the insight provided in this eBook from our extensive market research will help you make thoughtful, data-driven decisions as you chart your course for recovery.
CONTENTS:

This eBook details how to evolve your current operation practices to address the crisis:

We’ll cover:

1. Staff safety
2. Front of house
3. Housekeeping in a “Generation Clean” era
4. Maintenance & engineering
5. Guest rooms
6. Food & beverage
7. The spa
8. Meetings and events
What safeguards should hoteliers provide to ensure employee safety? Start by advising your staff and guests to follow the most basic of best practices for risk mitigation.
Repeatedly, creatively, and aggressively encourage employees and others to take the same steps they would normally take to avoid the seasonal flu.

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid exposure, which, per The World Health Organization (WHO) and other government guidelines means:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
- Stay home when you are unwell.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the bin.
- Ensure staff are appropriately trained.
- Wear PPE as directed by your hotel, department and specific task at hand.

“Without a doubt our teams and our colleagues are more important than ever when it comes to the running of our businesses, indeed to the very survival of our industry. We need to extend to them the opportunity to play a part in the recovery of the hospitality industry. We need to train them, to guide them and to allow them to perform at their best.”

- Peter Ducker FIH
  Chief Executive
  Institute of Hospitality (IoH)
Front of House

A smiling face. Shaking of hands. Friendly face-to-face interactions as guests check in. It’s the warm welcome by the front of house team that sets the expectation for what’s to come.
Some of those traditional greetings may have to change but the heart of hospitality will always remain the same. When greeting a guest, have different alternatives in mind that are in-line with the new social criteria. Nonverbal communication cues such as tone of voice, eye contact, posture and gentle nod of the head, hand over heart are a few ways that we can communicate with one another to mindfully reinforce a welcoming message. Simply being courteous and well-mannered can go a long way.

Some aspects of the guest experience will however have to be reimagined. From temperature checks upon entering, to mobile check-in and digital keys, an increase in technology will likely come into play, helping to manage the new age of contactless guest engagement.

“Guests may still be greeted with a smiling welcome, but with less personal interaction. Hopefully, technology allowing mobile check-in and digital keys can be implemented speedily and without too much investment.”

- Jane Pendlebury
CEO, Hospitality Professionals Association (HOSPA)
Action Steps:

- **Parking**: Self-parking should be encouraged where possible. If valet service is provided, disinfecting of contact points within the vehicle should be required. In addition, shuttle service should be limited and include frequent cleanings.

- **Temperature Checks**: It is suggested to implement temperature screening or thermal scanning for guests upon entering the building and employees before starting work.

- **Check-in and Check-out**: The use of technology such as self-service kiosks or contactless payments to reduce direct contact between staff and guests is encouraged. If unavailable, employees should minimise contact as much as possible.

- **Social Distancing**: Hotel management should promote social distancing measures to keep two meters between guests. Consider signage and markings to visually guide guests where and how to queue.

- **Front Desk Agents**: Practice social distancing by leaving an empty workstation between employees whenever possible.

- **Key Cards**: It’s recommended that key cards be disinfected before and after usage or digital key cards be used instead.

- **PPE**: Face masks are increasingly recommended by some health authorities. Consider placing health and hygiene reminders in high-traffic areas, including the front lobby area at a minimum, to indicate the proper way to wear, handle, and dispose of masks.

- **Public Areas**: Furniture in public areas should be rearranged to meet social distancing standards for the convenience and safety of guests. Cleaning and disinfecting should be frequent (multiple times per day) with an emphasis on hard non-porous surfaces including front desk counters, bell desks, lift buttons, door handles, public bathrooms, vending machines, ice machines, escalator and stair handrails, and surrounding areas.

“Public areas, lobbies, dining areas, escalators and lifts will now need to be disinfected more frequently throughout the day. Hotels should now implement a more aggressive disinfectant program by increasing cleaning of all high traffic touch points.”

- Michael Patterson
  Executive Director
  International Executive Housekeepers Association’s (IEHA)
Cleanliness standards need to be made visible or it’s as if they didn’t happen from the guest’s perspective. From the moment a guest enters the building, ensure team members are seen cleaning and wiping down door handles, counter tops, floors, and surfaces in high traffic areas.
Make sure all areas of the hotel, especially common areas, are part of the “Cleanliness Theater” show, where visible cues are played out to demonstrate the hotel is taking cleaning seriously. Display cleaning or sanitation-related industry certificates or accreditations. Feature prominent signage highlighting any associated materials or technologies (antimicrobial surfaces, air/water filtration, etc.).

Scrupulous cleaning and disinfecting processes and procedures will be vital to execute the cleanliness standards that the new “Generation Clean” guest – a singular segment that blurs the lines between Baby Boomers, Millennials and Gen X travellers with elevated cleanliness standards – will come to value. Establishing clear step by step standard operating procedures (SOPs) and cleaning protocols will be crucial to enhancing cleaning regimens and ensure nothing gets missed.
Action Steps:

- Review the hotel's housekeeping and disinfecting checklists to identify any additional precautionary steps needed.
- To ensure your exposure to microbes is properly mitigated, identify what surfaces need to be cleaned, who is responsible for each area, specific sanitising products to be used to clean each surface, and the various processes for each area of the property.
- Include the directions for use, the contact (or dwell) time and details on how to avoid cross-contamination by cleaning from clean to dirty.
- Remove as many non-essential items from public areas and rooms as possible, such as flowers, paper notes, pens, and hotel services advertisements, without compromising aesthetics.
- As you begin reopening, consider closing floors without guests and keeping one empty guestroom in between each occupied room. Close common areas based on local regulations.
- Make sure hand sanitiser dispensers are available in all public areas and consistently refilled.
- When selecting disinfecting products, suppliers, and other chemicals, train housekeeping staff to use the disinfectants correctly to protect the look and integrity of hotel furniture.
- Consider utilising sanitation technology, such as germ-zapping robots or a disinfection fogger, that is environmentally friendly and hypoallergenic.

“Hand sanitiser kills most germs, but keep in mind that it doesn’t fully remove them from the skin.”

— Michael Patterson
Executive Director
IEHA

“Reducing non-essential lighting will contribute to energy saving costs.”
In facilitating any short and long-term recovery planning, maximising the value and health of your hotel’s infrastructure will be essential.
History shows that building conditions can play a critical role in the spread of disease. But if buildings can make things worse, they can also make things better. By addressing immediate safety-related maintenance and engineering concerns—especially when the hotel is at limited capacity—you can lessen the impact on the hotel, while reducing health risks to staff and guests.

**Action Steps:**

- **Ventilation:** Biological contaminants can breed in stagnant water that has accumulated in humidifiers, drain pipes and ducts, or where water has collected on ceiling tiles, insulation, carpets, and upholstery. Therefore, your hotel should consider evaluating and improving the engineering controls using the building’s ventilation system. Proper ventilation quality should be prioritised to reduce the spread of bacteria and the negative effects these have for people with asthma or other respiratory problems. The Center for Disease Control recommends increasing ventilation rates and the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.

- **Filters:** Recent research found that when filtration rates were increased above industry minimums, there was a 50% reduction in the relative risk of viral transmission. Additionally, cheaper filters trap less than 20% of airborne virus-sized particles, while a higher-rated filter can trap closer to 80%. Portable air purifiers with high-efficiency particulate filters can also be effective in mitigating viral transmission at your property.

- **Humidity:** Buildings can increase humidity via heating and ventilation systems to maintain an optimal range of 40% to 60%, or by purchasing and installing portable humidifiers.

- **Inspections:** Hotels should expect to see new legislation when it comes to health inspections. This should magnify the importance of the condition of your property’s health.

- **Operating Procedures:** Use this time as an opportunity to create a new set of standard operating procedures around cleaning tasks, routine maintenance, and inspections. This applies to the hotel’s entire organisation, from public areas and amenity outlets to guestrooms and back of house.

- **Energy Costs:** Control energy costs and shut down air-conditioning and heating in areas which are not essential for operation during limited occupancy.

Make articulating these proactive and enhanced preventative maintenance measures a priority when communicating with guests. Promoting healthy hygiene practices will not only put your guests at ease, but likely become the number one most influential factor in the hotel booking cycle for the foreseeable future.
The crisis has brought with it a newfound understanding of how vulnerable we are as humans and how often we can become exposed in our day to day affairs.
In the context of a highly personal setting such as a hotel room, these concerns about safety become greatly amplified. Ease travel-related anxieties by addressing these concerns before guests arrive on property, while showing visible and sensory cues that the room is indeed a clean, safe space for relaxation.

Due to these increased health concerns, hotels have much to consider and guestrooms will have some major shifts across all touchpoints. Mini hand sanitisers, masks, and disinfectant wipes will likely be added to personal care amenity kits. In-room glassware will be replaced by water bottles. Single-use bathroom soaps will replace dispensers. Healthy, immune-boosting minibar offerings could surprise and delight guests.

As people ponder what is needed to keep themselves healthy, infusing wellbeing into the hotel’s amenity programme may also become necessary to meet the widespread change in personal behaviour.

“Anything you can do to limit contact with other people but still have some sort of experience related to wellness is especially good in the immediate climate.”

- Jenna Finkelstein
  Director, hotel advisory company CBRE
Action Steps:

- **Remove all printed material** such as promotional literature or magazines.
- **Remove excess** hangers, linens, and pillows.
- **Implement** single-use toiletries.
- **Include** laundry, housekeeping, and privacy options in the pre-arrival guestroom preferences.
- **Offer mini bars with healthier options**, pre-ordered and individually stocked per guest, delivered only upon request, or remove all together.
- **Install low-touch** vending machines with an expanded variety of options.
- **Utilise mobile or digital ordering** capabilities for room service and other service requests.
- **Provide contactless**, knock and drop delivery of in-room dining and other guest requests.
- **Integrate in-room** voice-assistant technology for touchless interactions.
- **Provide individually wrapped and sanitised** yoga mats combined with access to an on-demand yoga TV channel.
- **Promote mindful breathing**, shown to regulate sleep, lower blood pressure and cortisol levels, via meditation app integrations.
- **Consider next generation service technology applications**, automation, robots and devices for both guests and back of house to lessen the burden on service staff.

“I envisage a hotel bedroom with fewer touch points and a more slick and pragmatic approach to bedroom design. We might see robots replacing the mini bar and an app being used to make a coffee rather than pressing buttons on the Nespresso machine. Over time guest room refurbishment projects will reconsider better maintainable surfaces and incorporate them into designs.”

- Peter Duck er FIH
  Chief Executive IoH
With no shortage of buzzworthy restaurants and accolade-clad chefs, it takes a lot of passion and everyday effort to make a hotel restaurant stand out from other local dining options.
From culturally rich cuisine in exotic locations to a global abundance of gastronomic options under one roof on any given night, surveys show hotels with great restaurants are more memorable than those without.

The gracious nature of the dining experience is changing as we know it and what that looks like to chefs, hotels, and restauranteurs around the world is unfolding before us. From buffets to share-style dishes like tapas, menus and dining touchpoints are being rethought.

Just like the hotel itself, food safety, cleanliness and social distancing will be top of mind when it comes to restaurants. Again, make sure to play out those visible cues, from the chef and kitchen staff in protective wear to waiters making performances of wiping down tables and chairs. This will give diners peace of mind and ultimately enhance the dining experience.
Kitchen & Menu Action Steps:

- With disruptions in agriculture, meat and seafood supplies, have open conversations with vendors to make sure the value and freshness of their products are really coming through.
- Consider locally sourced, healthy menu options where you have more insight into their process.
- Refrain from share-style dishes and re-think the breakfast buffet and buffets in general.
- Simplify the menu and number of dishes if you have fewer kitchen staff.
- Focus on the dishes that are most popular, easiest to prepare, least wasteful, and most profitable.
- Compose ‘grab and go’ options.
- Enforce no hand-to-food contact by using gloves.
- Ensure the kitchen staff doesn’t share knives or equipment.
- Reinforce kitchen staff safety protocols, including proper hand washing and PPE.

Restaurant Action Steps:

- Re-plan the seating chart well in advance.
- Phase the number of guests allowed at one time, while seated at least two meters or six feet apart.
- Consider texting guests when tables are ready to avoid large gatherings.
- When possible, consider designated entrances and exits, reducing face-to-face exposure in a narrow entranceway.
- Implement temperature screening for diners and employees.
- Consider both guest and staff-facing technology that can reduce physical contact by enabling orders to be placed via the guest’s own mobile device along with touchless payment.
- Create printable, single-use menus.
- Present tablecloths and napkins as guests are ready to be seated to emphasise fresh linens.
- Rethink open kitchen formats where possible.
- Utilise outdoor space seasonally.

“Ramp up room service capabilities and totally re-think your breakfast buffet. Where a hotel is lucky enough to have outside areas; maximise the space.”

- Jane Pendlebury
CEO, HOSPA
Traditionally, revenue from spa and wellness programmes reside in forms that are more social in nature such as group retreats, fitness classes, and communal relaxation areas.
Even the very essence of spa and beauty treatments is very hands-on with close proximity between specialists and their guests. As social distancing continues, it will certainly be challenging to reimagine some of these fundamentals.

Spa-goers say they will return, but spas will need to take steps to make them feel safe. Spas will need to adjust their practices to satisfy consumer concerns, clarify how the spa-going experience will be different and what measures are being taken to protect guests.

“What we see is guests can’t wait to be pampered. Providing guests confidence and comfort is key.”

- Mark Sands
  Vice President of Wellness
  Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas
As travellers focus more on health, wellness, and mental wellbeing, providing a deeply relaxing experience will matter more than ever. Hotels will need to be part of the experience if they want their guests to be loyal and their business to stay relevant.

**Action Steps:**

- Evaluate the need to purchase new equipment such as UV lights and disinfecting devices.
- Temporarily adjust the spa menus and limit spa rituals where more than two people are in a single room, such as couple’s massages and four-hand massages.
- Evaluate limited timed bookings of spa amenities such as dry saunas, steam rooms, whirlpools, and lounges.
- Provide disposable slippers and a properly sanitised locker to each guest.
- Toiletries and hair dryers should be removed from locker areas with a new system for guests to access them.
- Evaluate greeting protocols for guest’s arrival such as replacing a handshake with a warm greeting, along with a ritual involving hand cleaning and warm towels.
- Technicians should wear appropriate PPE during treatments, including masks and gloves while delivering services.
- Wipe down any spaces or tables visibly in front of guests.
- Reorganise the way snacks, teas, infused water, and fruit will be provided for guest refreshment.

Heading into the future, spas should be mindful of these concerns. According to the International Spa Association, guests are likely to be most nervous in communal spaces such as locker rooms, lounges, and wet areas. Those areas may need to be temporarily closed or adapted during the immediate reopening phase to alleviate guest concerns.
For many hotels, group and meeting related bookings represent a significant amount of business in any given year.
Without an exact timeline for recovery, it’s hard to estimate when booked events will return. Research from Northstar Meetings Group’s Pulse Survey shows many industry professionals are eager to get back to face-to-face events as soon as it is safe to do so. In fact, 43% of planners polled said they are rescheduling their event for a later 2020 date, rather than moving it to 2021, as of June 3, 2020.

**So, what do events look like in the immediate view? That’s what many planners are working on as they plan for future business, while anticipating fundamental change.**

Virtual events have gained traction and helped to keep the industry afloat with live events on hold. Virtual capabilities remain an important part of a well-rounded meetings strategy and will likely continue to complement events moving forward. Even as physical events resume, attendance may be limited, and adjustments will be important for keeping events both financially viable and accessible to more delegates. Social distancing and cleanliness will be by far the biggest changes to the traditional business model. These two shifts trickle down to every aspect of the event—from mobile check-ins, space capacities and diagram planning, to the very tablecloths and napkins being placed on the table.

*As of June 3, 2020*
The enforcement of social distancing guidelines for event setup means that the square footage per attendee has increased. As a result, the effective event capacity at every property is lower than it was pre-crisis. For example, a standard board room may no longer be a viable option to host a 12-person board meeting. Instead the group may require a larger function hall. Properties must be creative in how they repurpose unused space, invest in new technology to retrofit for new event types, and create partnerships with outside providers to augment their available capacity.

**Action Steps:**

- Reevaluate your existing A/V equipment to host hybrid events.
- Reimagine larger suites and outdoor spaces to host events.
- Adjust your event space to account for more social distancing based on your local regulations.
- Shift buffet-style gatherings to sit-down plated meals.
- Consider individually wrapping or plating butler passed hors d’oeuvres, as well as adding additional bartenders and simplifying cocktails, excluding garnish.

Social distancing and safety measures may have to be considered in the long term, and event venues should strive to be early adopters, while considering government regulations to evaluate their viability. Hotels around the world will, however, have to win back client trust so that planners can continue to do what they do best - create exceptional event experiences.

“We have to think outside the box. We have to put on hold what was ‘normal’ and create a ‘new normal’ that still delivers the high standards and enjoyable experiences that we once knew.”

- Peter Ducker FIH
Chief Executive IoH
Global tourism has seen continued expansion in recent years, demonstrating the sector’s strength and increased desire for travel and connectedness among cultures. Times of crisis call for innovation. Hotels that can swiftly identify and creatively act on new procedures to mitigate health and safety concerns will ultimately enhance the guest experience and improve brand reputation.
Keep planning in the immediate, medium, and long term. Continue saving for the bottom line, identifying potential opportunities to improve revenues and reduce operating costs. Finally, reinforce your hotel’s cleanliness commitment to your guests and stakeholders at every chance possible with open, honest dialogue. Planning for health and safety now—while building a level of trust with guests—will pave the way for building brand equity and the future loyalists of tomorrow.

Because travel is a community and keeping a connected culture is how communities thrive

To learn more about Amadeus and the series of recovery eBooks on sales, marketing, and revenue management, visit the Amadeus recovery hub.

To learn more about The Hospitality Professionals Association - go here.
To learn more about the Institute of Hospitality - go here.
HOSPA – the Hospitality Professionals Association – is made up of senior hospitality professionals, key decision makers and leading industry figures.

Forming a network of experienced, well-respected hospitality operators, HOSPA provides instrumental guidance and advice to the wider industry, reacting swiftly to the coronavirus crisis to deliver calm, level-headed support and counsel.

Through its series of weekly webinars, HOSPA’s range of expert voices offer broad insight into how the industry can bounce back – insight that’s founded on years of expertise and first-hand experience.

Alongside its advisory webinars, HOSPA’s crisis positivity news page has helped showcase those businesses doing things well amidst the crisis, while also highlighting those businesses offering support to hospitality operators through its crisis support hub.

Become a part of HOSPA’s professional network today, by clicking here.
Through times of great change
the hospitality industry continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience. Together, we will learn, adapt, and grow towards a new future. As we look towards better days, Amadeus stands ready to help hoteliers worldwide manage the present and plan for the future.

For further information, visit amadeus-hospitality.com/crisis-management-resources/ or speak to an Amadeus representative today.