

Why the travel and tourism industry should market themselves right now

By [Mkhusele Vangile](#)

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September marks national tourism month, which focuses on the importance of the sector to the South African economy. In light of the lockdown travel restrictions, the travel and tourism industry is one of the most affected sectors. To ensure that businesses in the sector stay on top, this is the most opportune time to market the sector.



Source: Mikael Blomkvist via [Pexels](#)

As a major contributor to the local economy, the peak travelling period will help to boost the sector. Furthermore, with the rollout of the vaccine in South Africa, coupled with relaxed domestic travel regulations, there is no better time for businesses in the tourism industry to market their services than now.

According to the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan of August 2020, the sector was estimated to have a potential 75% revenue reduction, possibly putting 438, 000 jobs at risk.

This is why the travel and tourism industry should market its businesses right now:

- **The country is gradually opening up:**

Although the country is currently on Alert level 3 of the lockdown since the president made the announcement in July, the borders are partially opening up. The President announced that the 20 land borders which are currently operational will remain the same as they were and the other 33 land borders will remain closed as they are.

Travelling within the South African borders is allowed but people should follow the rules of sub-regulation(3) of the government gazette.

- **The change in weather contributes to people wanting to take a vacation:**

The weather is an integrated part of tourism. The type of weather people experience during their desired vacations is assumed to affect how tourist attractions and holidays as a whole are experienced.

However, the weather is one of the few relevant factors the tourism industry has no control over. Both tourist organisations and tourists themselves have to deal with the weather as it comes.

Most people choose to take vacations from September right through to March because it is much warmer during this time of the year.

Nobody wants to go on a vacation just so they can stay indoors, freeze from the cold and come back sick.

- **The financial effects of lockdown will make people want to travel domestically:**

Domestic tourism is helping to soften the hard blow brought by the pandemic and the decrease in the high rate of unemployment. In response to this, the government has taken impressive immediate action to restore and re-activate the sector while protecting jobs and businesses.

This will now have an effect on people travelling internationally, so they will now opt to do domestic travelling because of the effects of their economic status.

Businesses in the tourism industry should use various affordable means to market their businesses. For the South African tourism market that is trying to sell a domestic product or service, you must be cognizant that your clients are people all over the country - from urban areas to semi-urban areas and rural areas.

These are some of the few affordable ways that businesses can market their services and products:

Public relations

With the travel and tourism industry, public relations can help by getting greater visibility with your target market, by communicating your key messages in the right channel at the right time and it is not so costly.

Social media marketing

It is important to have a social media marketing strategy for a tourism business because it gives you a chance to reach potential clients that might not know about your business. Doing social media ads allows your business to reach potential tourists who are searching for a destination already. Social media ads start from R15, so it is really affordable.

If your business has funds, I highly recommend placing ads in the right publications or broadcast stations that reach your targeted tourists.

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