



**BRIGHT
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STRATEGY GROUP

Spring Recovery Trends *Summer 2021*



RECOVERY TRENDS

DISTRICTS ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS, BUT MANY BUSINESSES AND CUSTOMERS AREN'T PREPARED.

Marketing and communication are only part of the solution: Strong districts need to keep their stakeholders on track and create sustained enthusiasm.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

There's enormous pressure on districts from governments, boards, and businesses to create "Open for Business" campaigns, and many of us are using that phrase internally. It can be counter-productive to give visitors the impression that the district ever closed, and it minimizes the work of every stakeholder who worked hard to survive this past year. Districts have used "we" language and messages about the community coming together- now is the time to celebrate that community! Share creative, inspiring, and even difficult stories from the past year to thank your community, keep the enthusiasm going, and demonstrate that this summer will be even more exciting.

The limits of the past year made us all think creatively. Many annual events were scaled down and districts experimented with smaller events and activations that were often even more successful. In districts of every size, we saw smaller events draw as much as – or more! – interest than the larger events of the past. Big events may have a big payoff, but we know they're risky and this isn't a good time to put all our eggs in one basket. Staying small and nimble makes it easier to tailor events to specific audiences, work with limited budgets and buy-in, and react quickly if there are difficulties ahead.



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ACTION ITEMS

KEEP THE PARTY GOING

Even if we schedule fewer large events, it's still critical to bring the same number of people to our districts and to create the sense of energy we want everyone to feel. Some states have loosened alcohol laws to allow all restaurants and bars to offer to-go drinks. Others have picked up the beer garden trend and will allow open carry in designated zones. It's still a party- just more safely distanced.

BACK TO WORK

When the finish line is in sight, some people push themselves even harder, while others think "finally!" and begin to relax. Our business owners are exhausted, but we can't let them return to business as usual or to feel discouraged by small setbacks. Communication is as important as ever, and we're seeing many more districts investing in tools to report how business is booming; just because a business had a bad week, they need to know it was just a fluke and that the district is still busier than ever. This season, tourists and downtown employees are the numbers to watch.

Seasonal leisure tourism is within a few points of where it was in 2019, which bodes well for your attractions and can help keep the lights on at some hotels. If you can, ask your tourism organization to share their STR report with you. You can also use free tools like Google Analytics. Analytics doesn't just show you how many visitors you have, but what city they're coming from and whether they're business travelers, family travelers, and more. If tourism is critical, Facebook Ads can target people who are *planning* to travel, so you can get your message in front of them before they even arrive.

Office workers can be a bit trickier to measure cheaply. Google Analytics can show you the time of day people visited the site; one useful metric is to track the number of people in the city who visit the site during lunch hours.