

The Worldwide Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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The worldwide Coronavirus (COVID-19) is shaking up the world of tourism and hospitality and tourism/hospitality education. The worldwide Journal of Tourism and Hospitality stakeholders are in key positions of influence to make a difference in this time of crisis. It is important to provide solid leadership and calm principled approaches to the problems the virus has created. As air travel grinds to a halt and cruise ship companies stop sailing, concerts, sporting events, meetings/conventions are canceled; hotel occupancy is dramatically shrinking while restaurants and lounges try to find a way to stay afloat as customers stay home. The American Hotel and Lodging Association recently released a statement, "as you know, the hotel industry continues to take steps to ensure the safety of America's traveling public during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, many hoteliers are suffering substantial financial impacts and facing difficult decisions about their workforce and operations." While this may be the greatest contraction the industry has ever seen, we have witnessed/experienced major recessions and other issues that the industry has come back from successfully.

As the industry contracts, we are implementing strategies necessary to keep ourselves and our people safe. Tourism operations including hotels and restaurants have procedures in place for sanitation and it is important that we expand these to make certain our patrons are safe. Everyone should continue to take responsibility for enhanced cleaning and sanitizing of their working areas and this should be more than just custodial staff. We all would be advised to emphasize sanitation of high contact surfaces, tabletops, door handles, toilets, point of sale equipment, keyboards and making certain everything is being regularly sanitized. Handwashing and

the use of hand sanitizers is every person's responsibility especially after close contact with patrons or handling cash or credit cards. It is also important to stay away from others if we become ill. If an employee or student becomes ill, they should contact a healthcare professional and get treatment and stay away from work or school until they are healthy.

Shuttered primary/secondary schools are becoming more common. Post-secondary tourism and hospitality education programs scramble to move classes online or come up with strategies to meet their student needs that don't require face to face meetings. This is also effecting many of those who work in the industry who must find alternative child care. In addition, the contraction of the tourism and hospitality industry will limit opportunities for our students graduating and entering the workforce. These graduates will need counselling on effective strategies to find placement.

Besides following the common sense strategies to safeguard your health and health of those around us, it is important to maintain a positive outlook and avoid panic. The worldwide readers of this journal are the leaders who can make a difference as the world works through this crisis and will help provide our students and the industry guidance on how to bring back the prosperity we have grown to expect. Already we have seen restaurants increasing home food delivery, meetings and events blending on site and virtual experiences. When we finally move past this pandemic, it is important that we provide the leadership to industry to recreate the culture of positive tourist experiences and the joy of travel, epicurean delights and entertainment. Provide this vision to your stakeholders.

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