



Safe Itinerary Guide

Strategies and Insights
for Managing Travel in
a COVID-19 World



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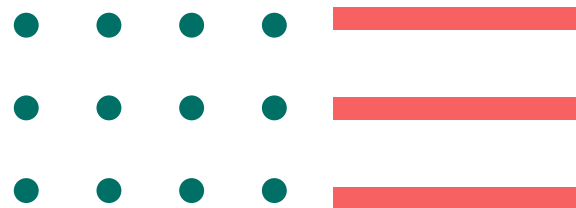
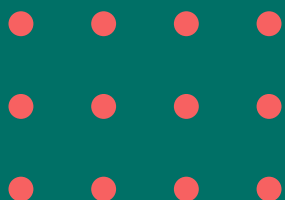


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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we live, work, and play. Consumer sentiments and needs have shifted, with concerns around safety and hygiene now coming to the fore.

As borders start to reopen and nations prepare to restart tourism, travel intermediaries must prepare to respond to new consumer priorities in curating and executing travel itineraries. This is to reassure visitors that they are in good hands when they book their travel with a travel agent, for business or leisure.

You will have a critical role to play in helping your clients navigate travel and safety requirements, as well as developing experiences or itineraries that are both safe and enjoyable.

This Safe Itinerary Guide was borne out of public and private sector discussions under the ambit of the Emerging Stronger Taskforce Tourism Alliance for Action. The Guide proposes good practices for travel intermediaries in Singapore and around the world in reimagining your travel business and the ideal visitor journey. Within this guide you will find:



Suggested business strategies to understand your target audience and personalise travel itineraries



A guide on designing the visitor experience in Singapore and what safe itineraries could look like in a COVID-19 world



Various capabilities you can consider building within your teams.

Even after COVID-19 ends, efforts to embrace the creation of personalised itineraries and develop service-oriented skills will help travel intermediaries build resilience against future pandemics.

Key Ideas for Industry to Consider:



Step 1: Understanding visitor profiles



Step 2: Implementing health and safety measures



Step 3: Redesigning visitor experiences



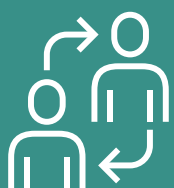
Step 4: Leveraging technology as a primary means of visitor engagement



Step 5: Ensuring consistency in service delivery across all touchpoints

How Businesses Can Respond

There are several resources on how businesses can strategise as they respond to new consumer priorities in the pandemic. The McKinsey Report “The Travel Industry Turned Upside Down” published in September 2020 proposes four key strategies:



1 Understand customers as microsegments, not monoliths

- This will guide successful customer experience interventions and new partnership plays
- Requires moving beyond basic demographics or trip purpose, and seeking to understand the traveller's behaviours and expectations, to provide a personalised experience



2 Design the next set of thoughtful customer experience (CX) interventions

- These should solve COVID-19-induced pain points, and pre-existing pain points, while generating ROI quickly
- To clearly understand where the customer journey begins and ends



3 Expand your view of the ecosystem by designing partnerships that restore traveller confidence

- Different players in the travel ecosystem working together to reach full potential recovery
- Are there opportunities for cross-sector partnerships that provide an opportunity for ongoing engagement between customers and brands?



4 Seize the reset moment to preserve nimble ways of working

- Making automation a strategic priority, and investing time now to leverage technology more efficiently and upskill staff





Strategy 1: Understand customers as microsegments, not monoliths

Instead of grouping customers based on basic demographics or purpose of visit, group them into small, precise segments based on various factors including behavioural predictions and needs, e.g. “digital nomads longing for adventure over the weekend”. This approach of customer targeting can create lasting, personal customer relationships.

Case Study: In August 2020, Changi Airport Group conducted a design thinking workshop with tourism industry stakeholders to ideate travellers' experiences in the new normal and identify friction points and potential solutions.



Pre-workshop interviews with business travellers and tourist guides allowed us to better understand their considerations when travelling in the new norm. We identified three main types of traveller personas:

- Cautious & Risk Averse,
- Careful & Curious, and
- Carefree & Comfortable.



During the workshop, participants identified three major pain points towards travel during COVID-19

- Safety and privacy concerns,
- Unfamiliarity with the latest safe management measures in Singapore and other destinations and
- Perceived hassle of measures such as SafeEntry and TraceTogether check-ins to shops

Participants also proposed solutions to ease pain points and ideated leisure experiences for the different traveller personas.



Findings: Key areas of focus for safe itineraries

- Experiences that are private, personalised, localised and authentic
- Seamless solutions to aid travellers to plan and manage their safe travel experiences in Singapore
- Clear pre- and post-arrival communications to manage travellers' and locals' expectations
- Education for travel agents and tourist guides to facilitate/empower their evolved role in a COVID-19 world

More details of workshop findings can be found at <https://trust.stb.gov.sg>

Visitor Personas

(Source: Changi Airport Group (CAG), August 2020 Design Thinking Workshop)

Context: CAG conducted interviews with business travellers to understand their needs and pain points towards travel during COVID times.

Three visitor personas arose: cautious and risk adverse; careful and curious; carefree and comfortable



Cautious & Risk Adverse

- Frequent traveller, but reluctant to travel during this period
- Expects safety measures to be enforced strictly
- Would avoid crowds, prefers outdoor/open air spaces



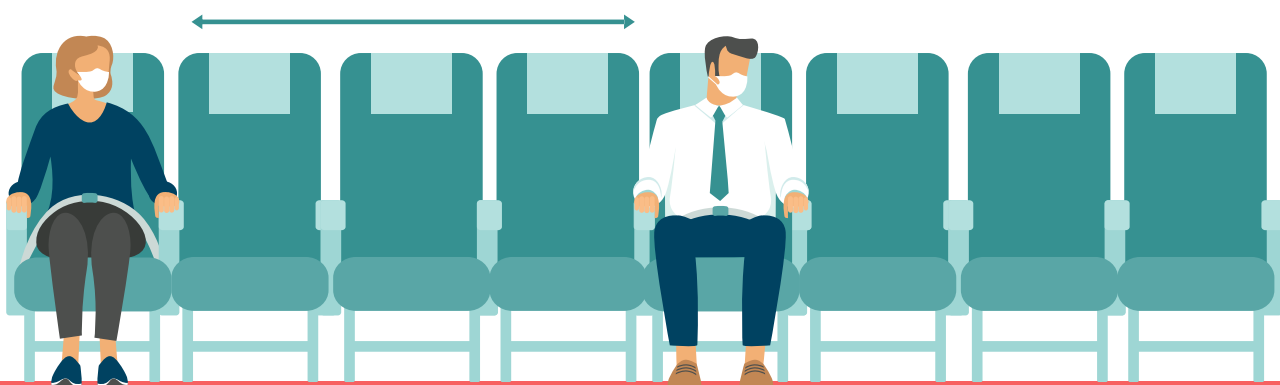
Careful & Curious

- Travels occasionally, hopes to travel soon
- Would wear masks, avoids crowds
- Wants authentic experiences – to do as the locals do



Carefree & Comfortable

- Itching to travel, sees present circumstances as the new normal
- Expects safety measures to be in place
- Spontaneous, and wants to maximise time during trips





Strategy 2: Design the next set of thoughtful customer experience (CX) interventions

Reimagine the customer journey to include high return on investment (ROI), thoughtful touches e.g. seamless refund processes, contactless hotel check-ins

Beyond big data: Building meaningful customer-experience (CX) interventions

- **Relying on market research and surveys to understand customers is no longer sufficient.** Surveys have limitations in uncovering real, intrinsic preferences.
- **Companies can consider conducting ethnographic research** i.e. observing their customers and end users to identify new opportunities to serve customers, glean insights on user behaviour, and subsequently test out these insights.
- A 2018 survey found that companies that **test with users and bring user-centered insights** and methods into their strategic decision-making have historically outperformed their peers nearly 2x, across industries.



Strategy 3: Expand your view of the ecosystem by designing partnerships that restore traveller confidence

New/unconventional partnerships in industry can create incremental revenue across the value chain. Three strategies building off examples in the McKinsey report include:

1) Explore cross-sector partnerships.



Travel agents can consider teaming up with healthcare providers to provide 24/7 medical assistance, to provide reassurance to visitors.

2) Explore alliances to pool the management of core assets and functions.



For example, in 2001, Marriott International, Hyatt, Accor, ClubCorp and IHG joined forces to develop an online marketplace for hotels and their key suppliers. 16 years later, the marketplace grew to nearly \$5 billion in annual managed spend for some 8,500 hospitality locations.

3) Explore partnerships to develop sustainable tourism, a pre-COVID-19 focus area.



- COVID-19 has provided examples of how changes in travel behaviour can impact climate change. Consumers are increasingly becoming aware of climate issues associated with travel and would like travel trade to implement environmentally-friendly solutions.



- In a 2019 McKinsey CleanSky survey of travellers, 54% were “really worried” about climate change, 40% said flying was a major contributor to their personal carbon footprint, and 53% said aviation should “definitely become carbon neutral” in the future.



Strategy 4: Seize the reset moment to preserve nimble ways of working

Making automation a strategic priority, and investing time now to leverage technology more efficiently and upskill staff



E.g. reinventing processes that previously required physical touchpoints or documents, to support contactless servicing capabilities.






The goal is to eliminate at least 30 percent of error-prone manual interventions from hundreds of day-to-day processes by relying on automation and digitisation.

Operating Context: Singapore's health policy on COVID-19

In line with national priorities to reduce the transmission risk of COVID-19, Singapore has implemented key guidelines that travel intermediaries must follow when implementing safe itineraries. These include achieving the following outcomes:








Outcomes to Achieve	Examples of Key Guidelines
 Reduce the transmission risk of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhering to sector-specific guidelines, including maximum group sizes and safe distancing requirements Implementing rigorous cleaning regimes, especially for high touch elements Adopting good hygiene practices, such as the frequent sanitising of hands, and wearing masks at all times except while eating and drinking
 Facilitate contact tracing in the event of a COVID positive case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining records of detailed tour itineraries and tour schedules, including details of participants Using SafeEntry where required and ensuring the installation of TraceTogether App on mobile phones for inbound travellers
 Risk-managed approach in border control measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requiring pre-departure tests for inbound travellers Subjecting travellers to on-arrival testing

The Visitor Experience Reimagined:

Key Features of a Safe Itinerary

As consumer sentiments and needs have shifted towards prioritising safety and hygiene, travellers could be more amenable to experiences that are exclusive and personalised. With travellers becoming increasingly discerning about the number of outbound trips they make, authenticity in travel experiences complemented with rewards could be the trigger that draws travellers to destinations. These are five key features of a Safe Itinerary that could appeal to travellers during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Safety	Bespoke	Exclusive	Rewards & Gamification ²	Other VIP Experiences
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe management measures in place Tech enablers to ensure visitors' adherence to SMMs SG Clean¹ certified establishments <p>¹National certification programme for businesses that meet standards of cleanliness and hygiene</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personalised experiences e.g. private shopping visits, private chef hosted meal on yacht/cable car 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After-hour or off-peak visits e.g. to malls, museums, attractions Dedicated seating areas e.g. front row seats 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deals and promotions Participating in games to unlock exclusive offers On-demand or real-time services Destination information <p>²Creates benefits to encourage travellers to keep geo-location turned on throughout their trip</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated arrival points VIP lounges Private transportation within the venue e.g. buggy service.



Reimagine Safe Travel: In your interactions with visitors, you can remind them about:

- Singapore's robust COVID-19 defence that includes our safe management measures (safe distancing, limited group sizes, mandatory mask wearing, etc) and contact-tracing capabilities (SafeEntry and TraceTogether)
- Singapore's active steps to vaccinate our resident population.

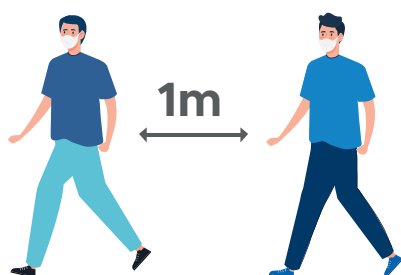
For more information, go to: www.sgclean.gov.sg

In a nutshell, a Safe Itinerary is envisioned to balance between:

Safe management measures and healthcare requirements (e.g. insurance) – to mitigate health/safety risks



No Intermingling between groups



Keep at least 1m away from other people

High-quality bespoke and personalised experiences that leverage technology



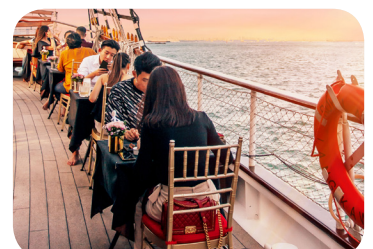
Vespa sidecar tours



Behind the scenes wildlife tour



Virtual tours



Sunset dinner cruise

Visitor Requirements

Travel agents can refer to the following resources to familiarise yourselves with Singapore's various Safe Travel Lanes and requirements for pre- and post-arrival.

Pre-Arrival



Latest requirements and details on Safe Travel Lanes for Arrival from Specific Countries/Region can be found at <https://safetravel.ica.gov.sg>



Short-term visitors via the Air Travel Pass or Reciprocal Green Lanes (RGLs) will need to have travel insurance for their COVID-19-related treatment or hospitalisation costs, with a minimum coverage of \$30,000; details at: <https://safetravel.ica.gov.sg/health/insurance-and-treatment>

Information may be subject to changes



Post-Arrival – These are Singapore's emergency response protocols when COVID-19 cases are detected. Ground handlers must be familiar with these steps:

Scenario 1



A group arrives on same flight on same day, takes same pre-arranged transport to hotel

One of the Guests receives a positive PCR test result notification by SMS

The Guest notifies tourist guide via SMS

Travel agent or tourist guide to notify STB via <https://go.gov.sg/covid19-taconfirmedcase>

Guest will be transferred to appropriate facility to conduct further test

Close contacts will be transferred to quarantine facility while waiting for test result to be released.

Positive PCR Case

All affected guests to serve quarantine including tourist guide

Travel agent to arrange hotel transfer & departure at end of quarantine period

Declares negative

Group rechecks in hotel and participates in the rest of the safe itinerary

Scenario 2



Guest is found unwell with serious symptoms during the tour

Ground handler is to:

- 1) Suspend tour immediately
- 2) Ensure his/her mask is properly worn
- 3) Isolate the participant
- 4) Maintain a safe distance from him/her
- 5) Call taxi/private hire vehicle and send participant to the nearest clinic. Where possible, and if the participant is not familiar with Singapore, a tourist guide or staff should accompany him/her
- 6) Clinic will assess and determine the next course of action for the unwell participant

Travel agent or tourist guide to advise other participants and contacts (e.g. drivers) to immediately return to their accommodation, monitor their health, and undertake self-quarantine in their accommodation. They may be contacted by MOH as part of contact tracing.

Travel agent or tourist guide to check in with the unwell participant on swab test result and inform STB (<https://go.gov.sg/covid19-tourconfirmedcases>) as soon as they become aware of confirmed COVID-19 case. The travel agent or tourist guide shall ensure that conveyance and tour equipment (e.g. sidecar, portable audio guide system) used during the tours are disinfected immediately, as a precautionary measure.

If unwell guest is tested COVID positive, MOH will be in touch with all other participants and staff in the group for contact tracing.

If unwell guest is tested COVID negative, other participants can end their self-quarantine and continue with the rest of the programme.

Destination Management Company or Tourist Guide to provide all necessary information to MOH to facilitate contact tracing. DMC/TG to inform STB (<https://go.gov.sg/covid19-tourconfirmedcases/>) as soon as they become aware of confirmed COVID-19 cases connected to their tours

Close contacts (incl. other participants) will be advised by MOH officials on the measures they should take.



Visitor Requirements

Post-Arrival



Ground handlers should note the various sector-specific safe management measures (SMMs), and put in place protocols to ensure visitors keep to these SMMs.



Transport

Group size should not exceed the approved number of persons. Individuals should be 1m apart in the vehicle



Attractions

Operate at no more than approved capacity



Tours

Keep to prevailing maximum group and sub-group size



Dining

Each table or group must adhere to prevailing group sizes, with at least 1m-spacing between tables and no intermingling.



Delegates must use **SafeEntry** and **TraceTogether**

Detailed safe management measures may be found on STB's website:

www.stb.gov.sg/content/stb/en/home-pages/safe-management-measures.html

Illustration:

What a Safe Itinerary Could Look Like In A COVID-19 World

Pre-Arrival



TA partners in-market TAs to get a better understanding of the travellers' behaviour and archetypes in the source market; curates programmes for different archetypes

Travel agents (TAs) need to check on the administrative details regarding the visitor's travel lane requirements e.g. COVID 19 test, quarantine, health certifications, etc.



TA contacts guest to get a sense of guests' risk appetite and expectations, and personalises the itinerary accordingly



TA conducts a virtual pre-trip briefing to inform guests of safe management measures (SMMs) and what to expect

Upon Arrival



Tourist guide to meet and greet guests

Post Arrival



Tourist guide to provide concierge service e.g. purchase of souvenirs on behalf of guest



After receiving negative test result, guests participate in pre-arranged leisure experiences that balances SMMs and healthcare requirements with high-quality bespoke experiences



Guests participate in virtual tours while awaiting results of COVID-19 test



Guests are ferried around in private transport to minimise contact with public

TAs to arrange pre-departure tests if required. The list of MOH-approved COVID-19 test providers can be found here: <https://www.moh.gov.sg/licensing-and-regulation/regulations-guidelines-and-circulars/details/list-of-covid-19-swab-providers>

Departure



Frontline staff at the various places of interest provide consistent service, gently remind guests to keep to SMMs



Guests check out of hotel



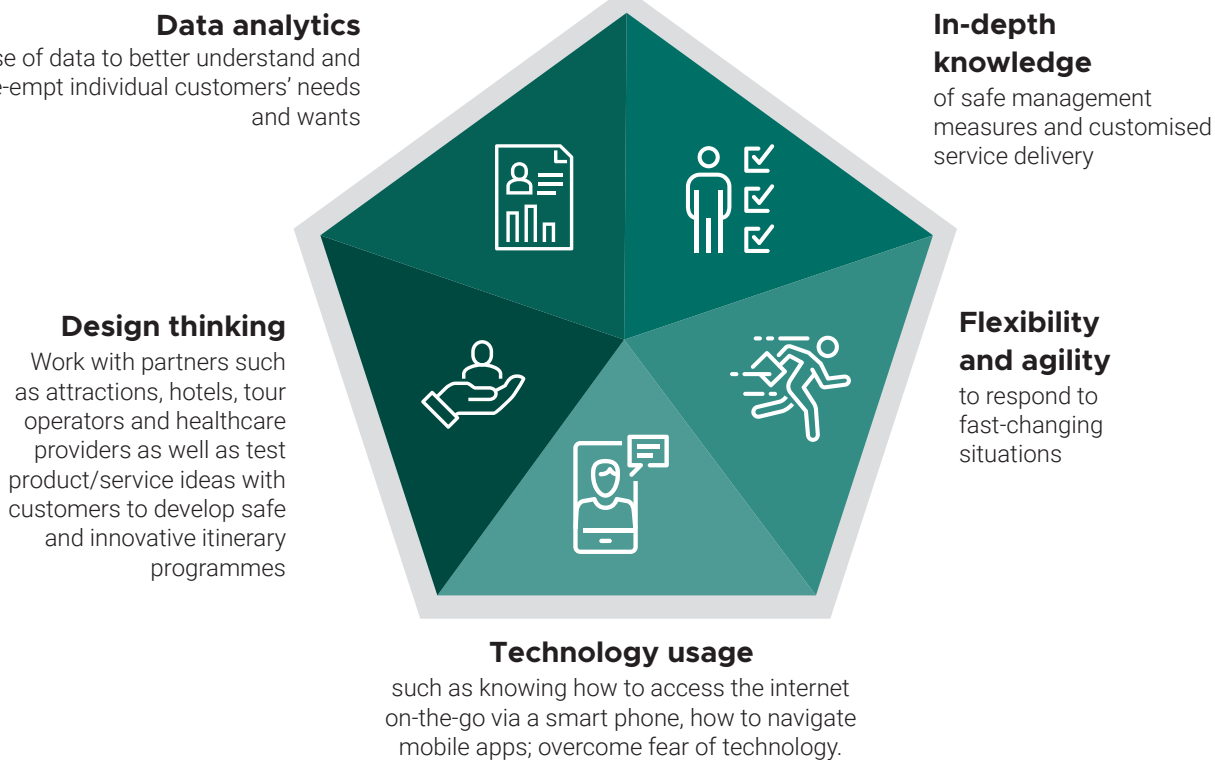
Guests depart from Singapore



TA checks on guests after 14 days to ensure they are well

Raising Capabilities

Tourism stakeholders should consider deepening these capabilities in their employees in order to respond to the new norms of travel in a post-Covid-19 world. Important skill sets include:



The roles of various tourism stakeholders will also evolve to meet the new demands and expectations of travellers.

Role of Tourist Guides (TGs)



- Ensure the smooth execution of all activities and a pleasant overall visitor journey
- Offer concierge-like service to visitors. E.g. organising purchase of souvenirs by pre-planning with travel agents a menu of options that guests can choose from
- Ensure Safe Management Measures (SMMs) are adhered to
- Respond to potential COVID-19 cases & scenarios as per emergency protocol

Role of Destination Management Companies (DMCs)



- Work with experience providers to curate a menu of innovative itinerary options for different traveller archetypes
- Assume overall responsibility of travellers during trip
- Plan and pre-arrange back-up programmes in the event of wet weather or crowded locations, and be flexible and agile in implementing them
- Provide personalised and concierge service e.g. buying and delivering souvenirs

DMCs, TGs and experience providers:



- Must have in-depth knowledge of SMMs
- Must think through the experience from a visitor's point-of-view, e.g. minimise mingling with locals, especially during meals
- Be able to handle visitors who do not keep to SMMs or deviate from itinerary, etc
- Be able to explain the rationale behind the SMMs to visitors in a friendly way, rather than a top-down manner

Players in the tourism ecosystem should consider working closely to ensure consistent service delivery and a seamless end-to-end visitor experience. One way is to develop a common set of communication pointers to use when engaging visitors.



Resources

Travel trade can refer to two documents STB has developed on tech recovery and thriving in the new normal.

Tech Recovery Guide

Outlines five key focus areas that travel trade can act on to deliver a safe, seamless and delightful visitor experience



Digital identity



Contactless and seamless experiences



Crowd management



Hybrid experiences



Health & sanitisation measures

The guide can be found [here](#) or by scanning the QR code below



An Industry Paper

Five opportunity areas that tourism businesses should consider to adapt and thrive in the new normal through technology and transformation



Enabling a contactless experience to instill confidence in consumers



Providing new ways for consumers to experience destination and offerings to build business resilience



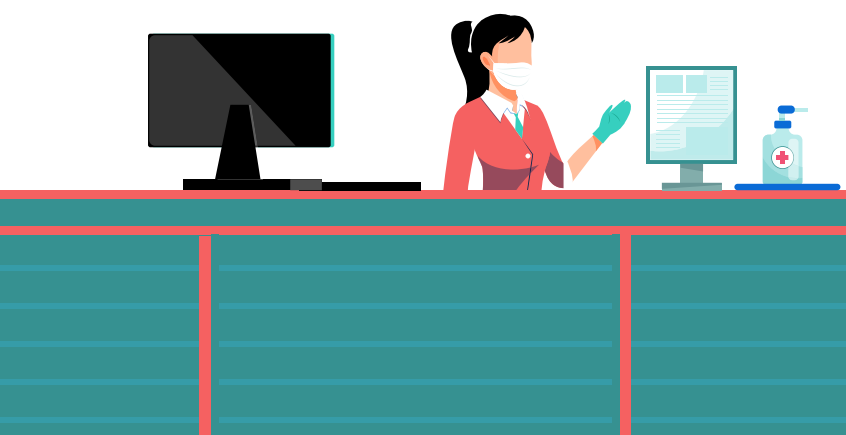
Real-time monitoring of tourism facilities and effective crowd management



Redesigning of workplaces for safety of staff members



Maintaining high levels of cleanliness and hygiene through new solutions



Download the full industry paper [here](#) or by scanning the QR code below



Case Study #1

Enhanced Precautionary Measures at Changi Airport

Addresses health and safety concerns



- Lifts, FAST check-in kiosks and bag-drop machines are fitted with proximity sensors so passengers will not need to touch the screens to check-in or to drop off their bags.



- Auto-clearance immigration lanes are being upgraded with a new biometric system that uses face and iris recognition technology to match passengers with their travel documents.



- Autonomous cleaning equipment is deployed to clean floors and carpets daily. It is equipped with a misting attachment that disinfects the carpets after cleaning.



- There are more than 1,200 hand sanitisers available for passengers' and airport staff's use, across all terminals and Jewel Changi Airport, from check-in rows to gate holdrooms.

- Passengers just need to point their finger close to the screen to make their selections.

- This replaces the need for traditional fingerprint-scanning.

Source: <https://www.changiairport.com/en/airport-guide/Covid-19/Covid-19-measures.html>

Case Study #2

Virtual events to address safety concerns; Exclusive experiences in bubble-wrapped small groups

Insight: Experiences should be customised for visitors based on their risk profiles.

STB launched a Request for Proposal for Destination Management Companies to design programmes, based on three traveller archetypes, for delegates of TravelRevive. Examples of programmes by the two appointed DMCs as follows:

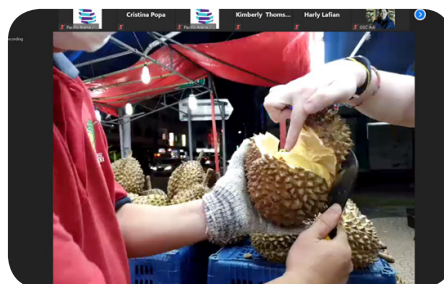
Cautious & Risk Averse



Virtual Scents of Singapore

- Via a Zoom video call, a guide takes guests on a tour of the Fort Canning spice garden, focusing on the scents and herbs present in Singapore.
- DIY perfume kits are delivered to guests' hotel rooms so they can create their own signature scent.

Careful & Curious



Eat Like a Local

- Via a Zoom video call, a guide takes guests on a live foodie tour at Singapore's Geylang district, a well-known foodie haven.
- This will feature an array of dishes including frog porridge, fried oysters and the king of all fruits – durian. A sampling of dishes will be delivered to guests' hotel rooms for their enjoyment.

Carefree & Comfortable



Malay Heritage & Vespa Tour

- Guests take a spin in a vintage Vespa sidecar through Kampong Gelam, with must-see sites including Sultan Mosque and the Istana Kampung Gelam.
- Dinner in an old-style shophouse.

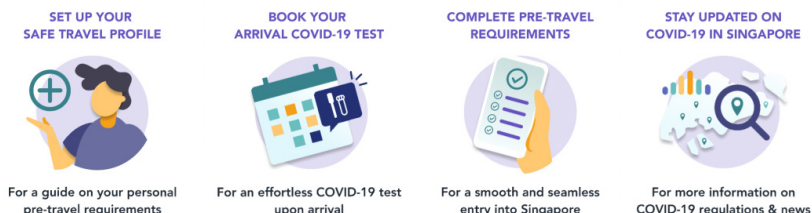
Photo credit: Pacific Arena Pte Ltd

Photo credit: Pacific Arena Pte Ltd

Case Study #3

Changi Airport Group's Safe Travel Concierge (STC)

Using technology to enable safe travel



STC: A personal online travel concierge that makes planning air travel into Singapore during COVID-19 easy and seamless.

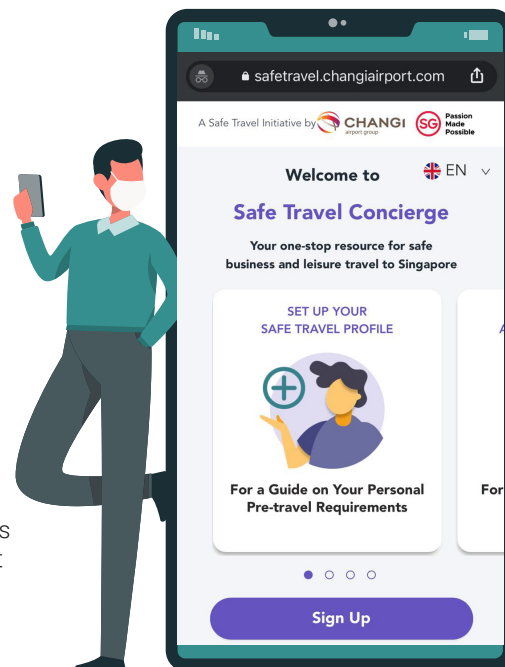


After registering an account and adding a trip, visitors will be shown a customised list of pre-travel requirements to complete before flying to Singapore.



Visitors can book their on-arrival COVID-19 PCR test and make changes to their booking easily on the STC. Instead of having to search different websites to determine what pre-travel documents are required, visitors can access the relevant information and forms through STC.

Sign up for the STC here: safetravel.changiairport.com



Case Study #4

Outdoor Escape Room Game Tour

Gamification to encourage learning about a precinct

Outdoor Escape Room Game Tour "Chinatown Murders" by Tribe Tours



New game tour where participants are thrown into a scenario to solve puzzles. The scene is Chinatown where a serial killer is on the loose. Participants are roped in to find the killer by solving a series of puzzles around Chinatown.



Played in teams of 2 – 5 persons, participants determine the route they take, and the choice of items to pick. Narrated throughout by a tourist guide/gamemaster, the guide will be in character throughout the tour.

Photo credit: Tribe Tours