

Travel-Mageddon Survival Kit

Creative ways to help your business and community right now

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Despite the fact that COVID-19 has essentially shuttered the tourism industry, businesses and communities can do a lot to keep potential customers engaged. Now is the time to get creative. Travel experts predict a pent-up demand to “hit the road” as soon as people are able to get out. Are you ready?

Here are 10 inexpensive ideas your business and community can use right now to help capture that eager market, avoid a tourism industry wipeout, and build long-term success.

- 1. Quick and easy videos** create sales now and more customers later. Create YouTube videos with your phone and post them on Facebook. Keep them fun, entertaining, and educational, so viewers will share with their friends. Parents will encourage their children to watch if you provide a learning opportunity. These are simple to create and easy on your budget. It is okay if your videos are unpolished—



viewers trust authenticity! Limit each video length to 60–90 seconds. You can also edit in free software, such as iMovie, and include time lapse, 360-degree views, or other effects, but keep it simple. Viewers also like stories, so consider storytelling to promote your destination. Monetize your video by incorporating your products into the video, and provide information how to purchase. Here's how Honey Creek Creamery cleverly incorporated their products into an [educational video](https://youtu.be/qVfATPyeldA) (<https://youtu.be/qVfATPyeldA>).

- 2. Create an E-cookbook of favorite dishes** to support your local restaurants, caterers, and food trucks. Generate financial support for your local dining establishments, while creating greater awareness of your community's assets. What are the most popular dishes of your local dining? Create a list of local favorites, and then invite each restaurant or food service to become a part of this promotion, by providing this recipe and a photo or story about it. If you are not sure what your most popular local dishes are, ask social media influencers for their favorite dishes of local restaurants in your area.

Compile the recipes, photos and stories into a PDF document, to create a special collection of your community's favorites. You do not need a graphic designer or a large budget for this project. Quickly compile with free design software, such as Canva. Make the PDF recipe book available for public purchase through a local website, with all proceeds going to the participating restaurants. Restaurants can also add a “purchase gift card to use later” button to your website.

- 3. Retail curbside bingo** will support your local businesses. Create a bingo card of participating retailers. Shoppers cross off a square when they pick up an order outside each business. When shoppers connect five squares in a row to get BINGO, they submit phone photos of those receipts to an email address on the card for a weekly raffle prize (such as a \$50 gift card). The first person each week who submits “blackout board” receipts for all spaces automatically wins a \$100 gift card (or a prize of the retailers' choosing).

Are you an Iowa retailer who would like to sell gift cards online, but you don't have a way to do that? An Iowa retail business is currently providing this free service to help other Iowa retailers. Go to [Iowa Love's website](https://iowalove.org) (<https://iowalove.org>) and click “Gift Cards” on the top of the homepage. Follow instructions to complete the form or learn more information.



4. **Make coloring book pages** from photos of your business or destination. Families will enjoy coloring the pages now, and will want to come to you, to see these places later. There are several websites to convert photos to coloring book pages, such as www.instructables.com/id/How-to-Make-a-Coloring-Book/
5. **Virtual puzzles** promote your business or destination – here is a twist to this same concept. Offer free virtual puzzles from your photos, so families will want to visit the puzzle destination they completed. Several websites and apps will create a virtual puzzle, such as [Jigsaw Explorer](http://www.jigsawexplorer.com/create-a-custom-jigsaw-puzzle/) (www.jigsawexplorer.com/create-a-custom-jigsaw-puzzle/).
6. **Zoom people to you!** Twenty million people now have Zoom accounts—market that opportunity at zero cost! Get yourself featured prominently during videoconferences, by creating a Zoom background of your destination. Here are [Zoom instructions](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/210707503-Virtual-Background) to create your own background (<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/210707503-Virtual-Background>) Tip: click off the mirror image option if you include text, to prevent your image reading backwards. Then offer your background as a free link to the public, with these instructions:

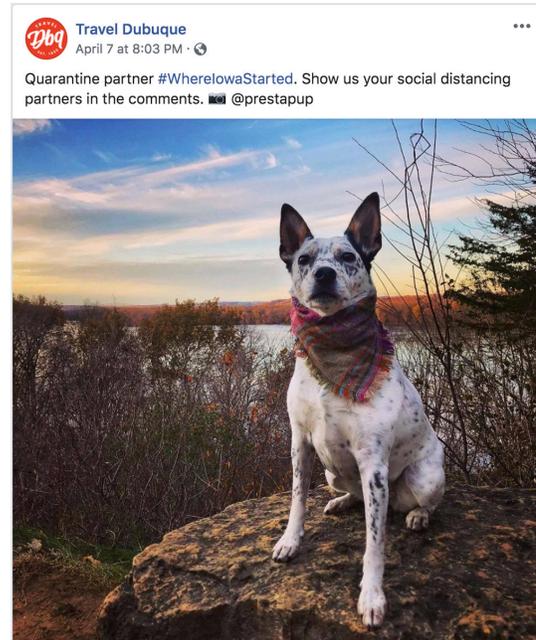
Simply follow these steps to add a fun background during your Zoom calls.

1. Use a dark solid background that is not the same color as your shirt. Be sure the area has good lighting.
 2. Save these images to your computer. Open Zoom.
 3. On the lower left of the screen click the up arrow “stop video” and select, “Choose a virtual background.”
 4. Click “+ Add Image” and upload the desired background.
 5. If your picture is hard to see, you may need to use a solid backdrop or add more light. Have fun!
7. **Real men use Pinterest** if they want to reach travelers. Let the data be your guide: Women make 80% of all travel decisions. Pinterest has over 320 million monthly active users, and 71% of those users are women. Many are at home and looking at Pinterest right now. If you do not have a Pinterest account to market yourself, get one...today...before your head hits your pillow.
 8. **Be clean** and let people see that you are actively cleaning. This virus will produce long-range impacts, with an increased expectation of cleanliness at public locations. Clean your business well, and include active cleaning during business hours. Let people see that you are doing your part to keep them safe.

9. **Use predictions to incorporate appealing messages** into social media now, so travelers will choose you later. Travel experts predict that consumers will seek off-the-beaten path experiences, private accommodations, and small group adventure activities, where they are able to be outdoors and surrounded by open air. Travel Dubuque pictures a great example with this Facebook post.

10. **Become the staycation destination.**

Many travelers will play it safe after restrictions are lifted, by choosing closer-to-home day trips or destinations. Work now to be ready for a new audience and give them an EASY BUTTON! Collaborate intensely with other area attractions to plan organized days, filled with a variety of fun experiences. Remember – when visitors think of a destination, they do not care about county lines or city boundaries. Look beyond your borders. Partner and plan together, market together, and work together to become the place people want to visit – even if it is their own hometown!



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