

10 TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING F.O.H

Fit the COMMUNICATION to the Crisis
RESPECT
individual
Circumstances
TREAT VISITORS AND STAFF THE SAME

Collaborate!



Acknowledge, but don't dwell in the Past!

Enjoy each other!

Rearticulate your value

Think about the FUTURE

MORE is LESS

BE CLEAR ON THE GUIDELINES



10 TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING F.O.H



When planning for reopening, ensure FOH staff from all teams are involved in the conversation. Many FOH staff are on furlough, but it is essential that they are consulted when putting plans together. Not only should they have a say in what their working practices are going to be, nobody knows the operation or visitors better than FOH. They will have great ideas that will make things run more smoothly. It's a win win.

TREAT
VISITORS
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In visitor attractions, we're used to putting the visitor at the centre of everything we do. Rightly so. However, when planning for reopening, it's important to remember that it's impossible to protect visitors without protecting staff. The confidence, comfort and happiness that FOH staff feel at being back in our spaces is a key part of getting the message across to visitors that they are going to have a safe and enjoyable day out.

Put as many protective measures in place as you can. Perspex screen or mask? Start off with both. If they make everyone feel better, why not? It's likely that as time goes on, some of the measures will seem like overkill and can be removed if everyone is happy.

A belt and braces approach for reopening will help FOH staff feel that every eventuality has been considered and that they can use choice in determining the best way to protect themselves and others.



**BE CLEAR
ON THE
GUIDELINES**

Our venues are opening with new rules and guidelines. In attractions that have already reopened, experience has shown that the risk of conflict is low: most visitors are happy to respect instructions given. However, this issue will come up, so ensure that things are clear- FOH should understand exactly what line to take, receive any necessary training to do so, and most importantly, know that they will have the full support of management.

Coronavirus and lockdown will have impacted staff in different ways. They may be vulnerable, shielding, or even recovering from the virus, and will need individual risk assessments and plans. We know that people in BAME communities are more at risk from Coronavirus, so this should be considered as well. In our attractions, we are all putting in place new procedures to look after our teams: just make sure that in the process, you have considered individual needs and circumstances too.



FiT *the COMMUNICATION to the crisis*

Coronavirus is a different shape of crisis to ones we normally prepare for. It didn't have a defined start date, and it won't have a clear end date either. Many attractions have put an amazing amount of work into internal crisis communications during lockdown, with frequent updates to keep staff in the loop. We all know the crisis this pandemic has created won't end when our attractions reopen, so don't abandon crisis comms either. Think hard about what information your teams will want and understand that this is still a moment when more face time will be needed.

For many attractions, 2020 was set to be a bumper year. Then everything changed. Take a moment to acknowledge the impact this loss might have on all staff, including FOH. They might have spent months developing a guided tour for an exhibition that's now been cancelled, or been looking forward to a project that's now on hold.

Acknowledge the loss, but try not to dwell on it. Refocus on moving forward, and building on the strong foundations that have been built.

**Acknowledge,
but don't
dwell
in THE
Past!**

When returning to work, a re-articulation of the value of your visitor experience might help your FOH teams focus on the present. Revisit your mission. Is it still relevant? A lot has changed over the last few months. What does your attraction offer that plays a role in our society right now? Is it connection to nature? Escapism? A place for families to reunite? We all want to be doing something that matters right now, so help your team understand what need your attraction is fulfilling, and why it's important.

**Rearticulate
your value**

During a crisis, it's hard to plan long term. But now, your FOH teams need to know there is a future beyond the next few weeks. Everyone understands that the next 12 months are going to be difficult for visitor attractions. Training budgets will be tight, but think creatively. Professional mentoring schemes, digital buddies and cross-sector learning are fairly low cost to implement, but could help support the long term health of the organisation, and allow FOH staff to develop their own professional skills too.

**Think
about the
FUTURE**





Finally, attractions people are people people. And for a long time, we've all been without our other people people. So, amongst all the planning and signage and barriers, take the time to enjoy having your team back on site, and allow them to enjoy each other. Support and encourage social interaction where possible, and reward good performance during these exceptional times. Enjoy being back together, and not only will the joy shine through to the visitors, but you'll remember why we all got into these jobs in the first place.

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