

Marketing on a Shoestring – Top Tips

Business Support Suite:
Sales & Marketing for Recovery



Contents

1. Define your market & determine your segments	1
2. Reshape your offer to suit the domestic market	2
3. Sign up to the COVID-19 Safety Charter	3
4. Align your messaging with 'Ireland – Make a Break for it' campaign #MakeaBreakforIt	4
5. Get Active with and on Discover Ireland	5
6. Promote your offer to the domestic market	7
7. Planning to target overseas visitors in 2021 and beyond	15
8. Final Tips	16
Checklist – Offline	17
Checklist – Digital	19

As COVID-19 restrictions are eased, tourism businesses all around the country are seeing a return to enquiries and bookings. But this year will be different as the market will be mostly domestic. This will mean changes for both businesses and visitors.

1. Define your market & determine your segments

It is likely that many of your customers will be Irish people, some of whom usually holiday in Ireland and many who usually holiday abroad. Current research indicates that Irish families with children over five years are likely to take longer holidays in July and August. Adults who are unconstrained by the school calendar are more likely to take longer holidays in September and October. It is expected that day trips and short breaks will be popular across all customer types between now and year end.

People want to meet up and get away with friends and family. With a strong preference for outdoor activities, they want to escape and relax; they want to explore new and familiar places, have fun, and enjoy great food and drink.

So how can you convert that intention to holiday in Ireland into actual bookings for your business? This document outlines practical advice on how you can win a fair share of domestic and local tourism business in 2020 by engaging in **low cost or no cost tactical marketing** and by engaging creatively and collaboratively with your neighbouring businesses.





2. Reshape your offer to suit the domestic market

Many businesses have created experiences that target an international audience. This year, you need to ensure that your offer resonates with a domestic audience and this may require a few small changes to how you deliver and promote the experience. It may also present opportunities to create brand new experiences that you know Irish people will really enjoy.

Action: Top tips to reshape your experience

1. Think about the segments in the market you are targeting and tailor experiences for each of them you feel your business core product can appeal to:
 - Is your target market families with young children?
 - Families with teenagers?
 - Friends on a short break?
 - Or will you focus on Irish people visiting friends or relatives who are on a daytrip?
2. Whoever you want to target, it is important to tailor your experience to them. For more information on tweaking your experiences for the domestic market, see the videos and supporting documents '[Reshaping the Saleable Experience for the Domestic Market](#)'.

3. Sign up to the COVID-19 Safety Charter

As the tourism and hospitality industry prepares to re-open, it is essential that everyone including visitors, employees, and management, can feel confident that your business can reopen safely.

The COVID-19 Safety Charter is designed to give this reassurance to tourism and hospitality consumers. Fáilte Ireland has published sector-specific operational guidelines for tourism businesses on how to meet government health recommendations. By signing up to the Charter, and having all your staff complete the supporting online infection control education programme, you and all your employees are committing to following those guidelines.

Fáilte Ireland have planned an advertising campaign for Summer 2020 to reach consumers that is designed to support this initiative, which will play a critical role in providing the detail behind the message and establish the link between the COVID-19 Safety Charter symbol and its meaning supporting customer reassurance.

Domestic holiday makers will be targeted as part of this campaign – those who are emerging from lockdown but remain cautious. The Charter and campaign will help reassure visitors that it is safe to visit accommodation providers, attractions, activities, restaurants, cafés and pubs. Having the Safety Charter on display in your premises, online, throughout your web, social media and print advertising, reassures customers that you are adhering to COVID-19 preventive protocols and are implementing relevant employee training in this regard.

Action: Top tips to engage with the COVID-19 Safety Charter

For further information and to register your business for the **COVID-19 Safety Charter** visit www.failteireland.ie.



4. Align your messaging with ‘Ireland – Make a Break for it’ campaign #MakeaBreakforIt

The Fáilte Ireland led domestic advertising campaign for Irish consumers kicks off on Saturday 27th June with a Call to Action of ‘Ireland – Make a Break for it’.

The campaign is all about the excitement of being able to make a break for it, after a period of living a very restricted life during the COVID-19 crisis. While we all ensured we complied with restrictions and will continue to adhere to COVID-19 safety advice and physical distancing, we all simply cannot wait for the chance to have a proper break, whether that is just one day with the family or a weekend away. The campaign’s voice will include messaging on types of breaks:

‘Ireland – Make a Break for it’ Domestic Marketing Campaign Tagline

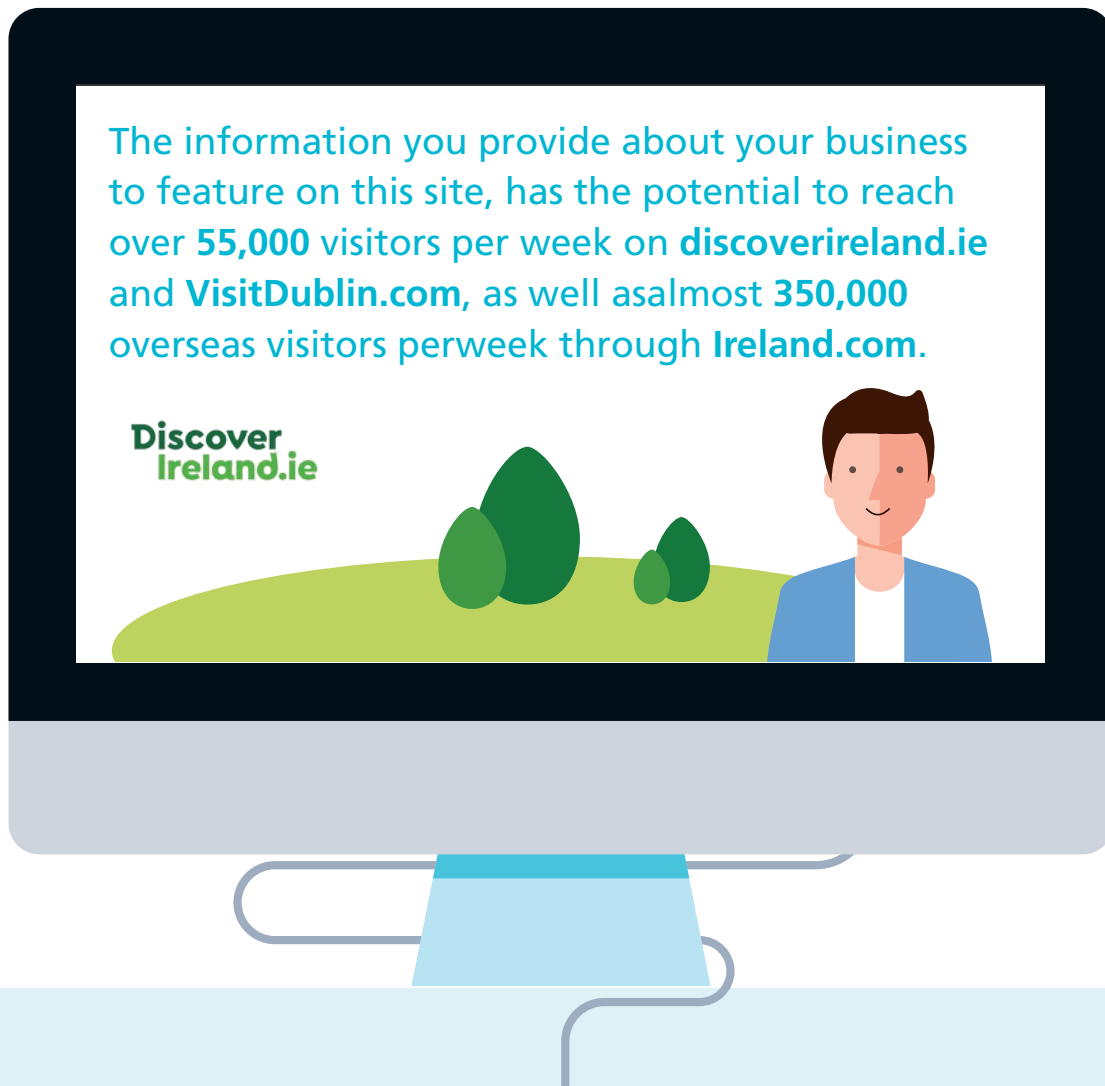
- A break does not just mean an extended period away from home.
- It could be a day out in the town, or a few hours spent in a museum.
- It could be a weekend away in a hotel, or a week spent exploring a different county or region.
- Once our country opens for travel again, the opportunities for exploration and discovery will be endless.



Action: Top tips to Align with Domestic Marketing Campaign

1. Share details of your reshaped saleable experience for the domestic market with Fáilte Ireland. These submissions will be considered against various criteria and if suitable could feature across marketing opportunities including social media, within online content or within press and media trips.
2. Utilise ‘Ireland – Make a Break for it’ tone of voice and assets on your website, on your domestic offers landing page and in your communications, so messaging like ‘Make a Break for it’ with the name of your business could be a good strapline for your advertising or social media posts.
3. Use the hashtags **#MakeaBreakforIt** (All Experience Brands) and Dublin **#FeelsBigger** (Dublin Experiences) in your communications and on your social channels so they will get picked up easier and are more likely to be reposted to optimise reach.

Visit the suite of supports under **Sales and Marketing for Recovery – Driving Domestic Sales** for help with reshaping your experience for the domestic market, optimising direct sales conversion through digital and your own website, boosting sales with social media and driving footfall to your business. www.covid19.failteireland.ie/sales-and-marketing <https://covid19.failteireland.ie/sales-and-marketing/>.



5. Get Active with and on Discover Ireland

Fáilte Ireland’s new digital ecosystem – [DiscoverIreland.ie](https://discoverireland.ie) – delivers a more efficient and engaging digital experience for visitors. Backed by the national advertising campaign it will be the trusted source of the best things to see and do on holidays in Ireland. It has a focus on driving referrals from the digital eco system to industry websites and booking engines. It targets both domestic visitors and Northern Ireland and this site feeds content to [Ireland.com](https://ireland.com) – Tourism Ireland is active in 21 Markets and has a digital B2C presence in a total of 29 Markets. The information you provide about your business to feature on this site, has the **potential to reach over 55,000 visitors per week on discoverireland.ie and [VisitDublin.com](https://visitdublin.com)**, as well as almost 350,000 overseas visitors per week through [Ireland.com](https://ireland.com).

If that’s not reason enough to take action now, to add or update your business listing now, nothing is!

Action: Top tips to enhance the visibility of your business through the Discover Ireland platform

1. Add or update your business information through the Get Listed form on <https://www.failteireland.ie/get-listed> Your business will then display on DiscoverIreland.ie. For Dublin businesses you also need to do this on www.visitdublin.ie.
2. When updating your listing make sure to include the following:
 - a. Upload the best quality images of your business
 - b. Check your contact details are correct
 - c. Update your opening hours
 - d. Check your website address is correct
 - e. Add links to your dedicated domestic offers landing pages and to social media platforms
 - f. Input a clear description of the experience you offer.
3. Ensure to link your homepage and ‘things to do in your area’ on your website to DiscoverIreland.ie as this allows your prospective customers to browse the Discover Ireland platform for further reassurance and ideas on things to see and do in your area and is likely to strengthen their decision to visit.
4. Share your story or tip of discovery with Fáilte Ireland for potential use within the ‘Ireland – Make a Break for it’ campaign by submitting content to Fáilte Ireland **‘Tell us your Story’** on www.failteireland.ie/get-listed.
5. For tips on how to do this see Imagery that Engages and Sells under the Driving Domestic Sales suite of supports and the accompanying downloadable documents **Top Tips – Creating Compelling Imagery and Video**.
6. Follow and connect with the campaign on social media and share the campaign’s content and engage with those looking for suggestions on local hidden gems and best things to see and do in the destination, using the campaign hashtags (see next point below).
7. Tag the campaign using **#DiscoverIreland** and campaign hashtags **#MakeaBreakforit** regional hashtags to increase reach and ensure your business is part of the conversation. The regional brand hashtags are:

#WildAtlanticWay

#IrelandsAncientEast

#LoveDublin

#IrelandsHiddenHeartlands





6. Promote your offer to the domestic market

In addition to optimising your presence on www.DiscoverIreland.ie, there are numerous other marketing opportunities available to you and it is vital that your business is present everywhere that customers look when planning their holiday.

In this section we have summarised the main promotional platforms that you can use for free or for a low cost to ensure potential customers can find you. It includes online and offline platforms that customers use before they get to their chosen holiday destination, as well as recommendations on how you can increase visibility with them while they are in destination.

Most importantly, you should have clear and consistent messaging on all promotional platforms that shouts out “we are open, here’s our offer, book now”.

a) On your own website

Your own brand website is your most valuable promotional tool and it is important that the information on it is current. This is one of the places you may need to spend a little money on.

Action: 10 Top tips to ensure your website provides for an optimal customer experience and supports sales conversion

1. **Communicate that you are open** for business and that you are ready to welcome visitors on the home page.
2. **Reassure potential visitors that they will be safe without the safety** message clouding the overall message.
3. **Showcase your specific landing page offers** and once there, provide them with a compelling offer, headline, supporting text, images, offer details, social proof, testimonials, destination message, contact details, regional brand logo and a clear call to action i.e. 'book now'.
4. **Link your homepage and 'things to do in your area' pages to www.DiscoverIreland.ie.**
5. **Make it easy for the customer to find your contact details** – telephone, email address, postal address and Eircode as well as directions to the business.
6. **Feature your relevant destination brand** (Dublin, Ireland's Ancient East, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Wild Atlantic Way) e.g. use the destination brand logo, imagery and language and show how your experience can bring the destination brand to life.
7. **Ensure you are registered with Google My Business** – a free tool that allows you to optimise your website profile and increase visitor numbers to the site https://www.google.com/intl/en_ie/business/.
8. **Include testimonials from previous customers** – we know how important review sites are and it is just as important to showcase reviews on your own website.
9. **Ensure your website is optimised for search engine results** – liaise with your web designer to ensure the SEO (search engine optimisation) for your brand website is reaching local and domestic customers and is driving as much free organic traffic as possible to your website.
10. **Promote your social media profiles** i.e. ensure you have 'easy to find' icon links to your Facebook, Instagram, Twitter accounts from your website.

For more information on making the most of your website, including how to design landing pages to drive direct conversions to your business via dedicated offers, see the videos and supporting documents on '**Optimising direct sales conversion through digital with own brand web**' and accompanying infographic that you could use to guide your web developer on the type of landing page you want.

b) Through your Social media channels

Social media channels offer excellent opportunities to connect with customers for free. To make the most of your engagement with the 'Ireland – Make a Break for it' campaign, you can use these free tools to drive traffic to your offers landing page.



For the domestic market, the three most relevant social media sites are **Facebook, Instagram and Twitter**. When people are researching holiday destinations online, it is important that they can easily find your business. Your active social media presence will help them to plan their schedule and get in touch with you.

Action: 8 Top tips to ensure your social media channels encourage people to connect and book and drive customers to your website for sales conversion

1. **Review your social profiles on a regular basis** to ensure that the information is up to date and on message.
2. **Include your telephone number, Eircode, website address, email address and opening hours** on your social profiles.
3. **Post a variety of content regularly** including photos, videos, customer reviews
4. **Post stories and live broadcasts**, which have become a really popular way for visitors to consume content.
5. **Share links to the dedicated offers landing page on your website.**
6. **Tag your location and the locations of nearby tourism providers** with whom you collaborate on social media so your customers can find you more easily.
7. **Use hashtags which help to classify your content on a specific topic.**
Important hashtags at this time are: #DiscoverIreland, #MakeaBreakforit and you should also use the brand destination that is relevant to you i.e. #LoveDublin, #IrelandsAncientEast, #IrelandsHiddenHeartlands, #WildAtlanticWay.
8. **Engage with online review sites** e.g. TripAdvisor, Google Reviews and Facebook reviews – with emphasis on getting customers to post COVID-19 reopening reviews.

For more information on how to make the most of your social media activity see the videos and supporting documentation **'Boosting sales with Social Media'** and **'Driving Footfall'** in the **Driving Domestic Sales suite of supports**.

c) On Reseller Platforms/3rd Party Sites

When researching their holiday, customers will look in a variety of places to find out as much as they can about your business and the local area. Having a presence on reseller platforms or 3rd party websites can help to increase your visibility and while many allow you to list your business and your offer for free, some will take a commission on sales that are generated by the website e.g. Airbnb Experiences and TripAdvisor.



Action: 2 Top tips to ensure your business is easily found by prospective customers researching your area

1. Ensure you have your business listed on local platforms such as your county tourism website or your town website. Tourism providers who share reciprocal links on their own website will also help to raise awareness of the local area.
2. Explore low cost opportunities for listings on online platforms that are relevant to your target market such as FamilyFun.ie, Rollercoaster.ie, Mummypages.ie, Greatdaysout.ie, Mykidstime.com etc.

d) Through Direct marketing

Irish holidaymakers like to return to the same place year after year with many families going back to where they holidayed as children themselves. It is now more important than ever to get in touch with previous customers.



Action: Top tips to ensure you communicate directly with loyal & past customers to drive sales and reward loyalty

1. Observing GDPR guidelines, use your CRM to identify past and repeat customers to **contact them with a newsletter, through social media, or by way of a branded postcard or a handwritten postcard from your local destination**, updating them on everything that is new to see and do in your area and the measures being taken by businesses and the community to ensure their safety when they visit.
 - **Remind your loyal customers why they love to holiday with you** and that you look forward to welcoming them and their families back this year.
 - **Refer to the offers you have prepared and how they can book by telephone, email or website;** remember to include links to your dedicated offers landing page.
 - **Offer them something as a token for their repeat custom**, like a welcome local cocktail or a children free offer, or perhaps a free tea/coffee with every purchase of €25 from your retail outlet, or a free children's ice-cream or fruit cocktail with every adult dessert and coffee/tea purchased.

e) Using local, regional, and national PR

National, regional, and local travel media are always on the lookout for great imagery and quirky stories about new holiday experiences. This year they are especially keen to feature stories about holidays in Ireland. Make it easy for them to find out about you by getting in contact with them yourself.

Action: Top tip to ensure you are engaging free PR opportunities to drive awareness of your business

- When reshaping an existing or creating a new experience for the domestic market or if you have created brand new experiences that target day-trips for locals or short-breaks for families, send a press release with images to local, regional and national travel media.



It's important to understand that not every press release you send in will be used, but keep sending updates over the course of the summer and over time the journalists will become familiar with you as a source of good content.

f) By Cross-selling with other businesses

Never has it been as important to collaborate with other tourism providers in your local area. Remember, when choosing a destination for their summer holiday, off season or winter break, customers need to know that, in addition to having a great experience with you, there is lots to do and see in your region. They must feel confident that the needs of the entire family will be met and the information you give them about the wider geographic area could make the difference between them choosing you or going to a different part of Ireland.

It is therefore essential that as a tourism provider you know what is available in your region, you are familiar with local offers and, when dealing with customer enquiries, you cross-sell on behalf of other local tourism providers and the entire destination.

If you need imagery for your local area that you would like to use on your website, social media or printed material, you can download quality photographs and videos for free from Fáilte Ireland’s digital resource library Ireland’s Content Pool at www.irelandscontentpool.com.

Action: Top tips to ensure you can be seen by visitors to accommodations and other experiences nearby, reciprocating the offer to support local businesses

1. Link in with other tourism providers, local food producers, all local accommodation providers, including self catering, caravan and camping as well as visitor accommodation, local tour guides, activity providers, visitor retail outlets and your nearest Tourist Information Office, fuel station etc. Identify other experiences locally with whom you could partner to add value to your own experience and/or to encourage visitors to stay longer in your area.
2. Consider offering partner offers like 10% off when you visit, if you show your purchase receipt from your neighbouring Restaurant or Gift Retailer.

g) By Measuring your results and taking action based on data

As you work your way through all of these no cost or low cost tactical marketing activities, it is important for you to know which ones are working best for you so that you know what to concentrate on in the future.

The ultimate measure is increased sales, so depending on your business it is important to monitor things like visitor numbers, average sale value, (particularly by customer segment) length of stay, add-on sales etc by investing in booking and point of sale systems that allows you do that. However, a simple manual diary (transferred to an excel sheet each day) to record ticket types and additional retail or refreshment purchases by customer segments allows you analyse which segments are most profitable for your business at which times of year.



Action: 4 Top tips to ensure you can measure your marketing and promotion efforts to track what is working best

1. **If you engage in direct marketing with previous customers, you should monitor the level of conversion** i.e. how many bookings did you secure because of the newsletters/postcards/emails you sent? So be sure to communicate your offer in a way that allows you to track bookings and spend from this.
2. **If you are promoting offers through your social media, consider tagging them using a code**, so customers use that code when booking with you, so you can track the performance of your social media for sales.
3. **If you are collaborating with other tourism providers in your local area, identify a way to capture, and record referred bookings** from your partners
4. Similarly, **if you upload offers onto 3rd party or referral sites, you should record how many sales those sites generate** for you over the course of the year.
5. **Measure your website performance using Google Analytics**, a free tool that will help you track metrics like the number of conversions or ecommerce sales. To measure the impact of your social media activities, you should use the Insights tools available for free on your Facebook or Instagram accounts.

To find out more about monitoring your digital activities see **“Tracking key web performance metrics with Google Analytics”** in the Driving Domestic Sales suite of supports.





7. Planning to target overseas visitors in 2021 and beyond

Whilst the focus for this year is on the domestic market, we also need to start thinking about the return of our international visitors from 2021. Tourism Ireland is your window to international markets, and it is important to keep the teams in the market offices updated on the tourism experiences you offer.

Action: 5 Top tips to engage with Tourism Ireland Promotional opportunities to grow visibility of your business in the International Marketplace

1. **Register with www.tourismirelandindustryopportunities.com** to be kept informed about opportunities to promote your business in the overseas markets.
2. **Submit stories about your experience to 'Have you a story to tell'**, which Tourism Ireland can use to share fresh content with their global network of travel trade, media contacts and consumers.
3. **Target international customers directly for free by uploading your offers on Tourism Ireland's international consumer website www.Ireland.com.** Tourism Ireland will translate your offers and promote them to over 19 million people on their market websites.
4. **Register with community.ireland.com, the community forum where you can join in the conversation** and share your knowledge to help international visitors plan their holiday with you.
5. **Contact your local Fáilte Ireland representative to explore opportunities to feature your business on future buyer and media fams**, which may be happening virtually throughout the year during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

8. Final Tips

The domestic market has always been important for Irish tourism providers and this year it will be the only source of revenue for many. All indicators show that Irish people are looking forward to taking their annual summer holiday and some short breaks or daytrips in Ireland this year.

Action: 8 Top tips you cannot afford not to do in 2020 to Market your Business

1. Keep up to date with new research on the domestic market <https://covid19.failteireland.ie/industry-updates/category/consumer-sentiment-behaviour-reports/>.
2. Implement the tactical marketing activities outlined in this document so that you can ensure your business is included in the consideration set when people are planning their trips and that you are fully aligned to all national domestic marketing campaign activity.
3. Engage fully with the 'Ireland – Make a Break for it' campaign and the new www.DiscoverIreland.ie website.
4. Ensure all your promotional activity is focused on driving traffic to the dedicated offers landing page on your own website.
5. Respond quickly and comprehensively to enquiries, aiming to always convert the sale.
6. Ensure all staff understand the importance of their role in delivering quality customer service and memorable experiences.
7. Be sure to give customers who have been with you a reason and a call to action to return: give them a voucher for a repeat visit to be used by X date to use with other family/friends for shoulder/off season or to pass to a family or friend for their use, so you are creating a pipeline for off season sales.
8. Consider a promotion code for booking (and possibly a small value add when booking made) for frontline workers as a reward and to say thanks for their service during COVID-19 crisis – you can target this for off peak time/days if you wish, but the positive PR will be good and it will reflect your business values and drive sales.
9. Remember, happy customers will become your best salespeople in driving repeat and referral business on your behalf.
10. Start working on the implementation of your marketing plan, see the Marketing Action Plan Checklist.



Checklist – Offline

	Action	To do Yes/No	Budget €	Who will do it?	When it will be done?
1	We have identified our target market segments i.e. families with pre-teens, families with teens, friends on short breaks, day-trips etc.				
2	We will keep up to date with new research on the domestic market https://covid19.failteireland.ie/industry-updates/category/consumer-sentiment-behaviour-reports/				
3	We will reshape our experience to better meet the needs of the domestic market.				
4	We will create some new experiences that we know will appeal to the domestic market.				
5	We have signed up to the COVID-19 Safety Charter to give reassurance to our customers https://www.failteireland.ie/apply-covid-19-safety-charter.aspx				
6	We are engaging with the Fáilte Ireland 'Ireland – Make a Break for it' campaign through the 'Tell us Your Story' tool on www.failteireland.ie/get-listed				
7	We are incorporating the 'Ireland – Make a Break for it' messaging and imagery in all promotional material when promoting our business and our local area.				

	Action	To do Yes/No	Budget €	Who will do it?	When it will be done?
8	We are contacting local, regional and national travel media with press releases and imagery about our re-opening offers.				
9	We have developed templates to ensure we respond to customer enquiries quickly and comprehensively and we try to convert every enquiry to a sale.				
10	We have identified a number of key tourism partners in the local area and together we are cross-selling each other and the wider geographic destination.				
11	We inform staff in the local tourist office, in other local tourism businesses and through other referral sources about our visitor experience.				
12	<p>We are monitoring the impact of our marketing so that we know what works best for future reference. For example;</p> <p>We track bookings that come from direct marketing with past customers</p> <p>We use Google Analytics to measure conversion rates on our website</p> <p>We monitor which social media posts attract the most attention.</p>				
13	<p>We ensure all staff understand the vital role they play in delivering quality customer service and memorable experiences to help drive repeat and referral business.</p> <p>We have signed up our business to the Fáilte Ireland learning hub so all staff can take the Accredited Service Excellence online programme.</p> <p>https://covid19.failteireland.ie/register-failte-ireland-learning-hub/</p>				

Checklist – Digital

	Action	To do Yes/No	Budget €	Who will do it?	When it will be done?
1	We have updated our listing on www.DiscoverIreland.ie with information about the experience we offer and our contact details. Our updated listing includes new imagery and a link to the dedicated offers landing page on our website.				
2	We engage fully with the Fáilte Ireland 'Ireland – Make a Break for it' domestic marketing campaign and use #DiscoverIreland, #MakeaBreakforit and location tagging in all our social media posts to get discovered.				
3	Our re-opening offers and safety message are highlighted on the home page of our website and we link our home page and 'things to do in our area' to DiscoverIreland.ie				
4	We have created a dedicated landing page for offers on our website and it has a clear call to action – 'book now' – to optimise sales.				
5	Contact us button/details are easy to find on our website.				
6	Our website features our local destination brand (Dublin/Ireland's Ancient East/Ireland's Hidden Heartlands/Wild Atlantic Way) and shows how we bring the destination to life.				
7	We use the relevant destination brand hashtag in all our social media posts; #WildAtlanticWay #IrelandsAncientEast #WildAtlanticWay #IrelandsAncientEast				

	Action	To do Yes/No	Budget €	Who will do it?	When it will be done?
8	We have registered with Google My Business to improve our visibility online.				
9	We are liaising with our web developer to ensure our SEO (search engine optimisation) is driving organic traffic to our website.				
10	We keep our social media profiles up to date and actively post content, stories and live broadcasts.				
11	We link our social media feeds to our website offers landing page.				
12	We actively engage with online reviews on TripAdvisor, Google and social media platforms and we encourage user generated content e.g. via competitions on social media.				
13	We have listings on relevant reseller and 3rd party sites; we share reciprocal links with local partners and create 'story-led' connections between the businesses to increase awareness of things to do in the local area.				
14	We contact previous loyal customers directly using digital and off-line tools such as newsletters, social media, postcards branded with our business or postcards from our local destination and invite them to come back to us this year.				
15	We are already planning for the return of international visitors from 2021 and have registered with www.tourismirelandindustryopportunities.com to be kept informed about promotional opportunities in the international marketplace.				