

# Are we ready for the revenge tourists?

The phenomenon of revenge travel, which refers to the desire to take a vacation after being “imprisoned” for an extended period. It also stems from a condition known as lockdown fatigue, or exhaustion caused by the monotony of staying home.

People are becoming more cautiously optimistic about the prospect of travelling again as the vaccine rollout is accelerated. Many travel experts believe that bookings will increase in the coming months and years. While it is impossible to predict when demand will return to normal, we can be certain that it will. Internationally, we are now seeing more tourists in the luxury category, followed by the upmarket, but the budget market has yet to take off. We should keep in mind that the needs and requirements of tourists back in summer 2020 indicated significant changes. We need to use what we’ve learnt since then to prepare for their massive return.

## What will revenge travellers look for?

They are looking for local, less commercialised, less explored, and social-distancing-friendly tourist destinations. Revenge travel does not have to be costly or take place in well-known locations. They prefer to stay in secluded areas with good accommodation facilities, where they can enjoy nature, relax in a pool, and read books in a peaceful environment. Beaches, rural, hiking and camping destinations are examples of places where they can spend a lot of time outside. People want to travel as far as they can without leaving the country to avoid the hassle of taking Covid-19 tests and following quarantine requirements. Those who yearn for true international travel, on the other hand, will most likely turn to countries with less restrictions.

When leisure travel becomes available again, many “vengeful” travellers may feel more inclined



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to splurge and treat themselves. With so much pent-up demand, all indications are that people will be willing to spend more on their travel experiences compared with before the pandemic. As a result, upgrades will be the norm, with travellers determined to “make up for lost time” over the past year. Hotels should think about creating full-service treatment — dinner at their fine-dining establishment, a spa treatment, a special outing, or a combination of the above could be included.

People will understandably remain concerned about their health, so services and products that can put their minds at ease will be appreciated. As vaccines are yet to be available for younger children, families will be willing to spend more on accommodations that are safe, sanitary and comfortable. Room service will be an appealing option, allowing guests to avoid the crowds at the buffet tables. Airport transfers in sanitised vehicles will also be a consideration. Furthermore, because a healthy lifestyle has been widely promoted as a means of improving one’s immune system, there is understandably a growing demand for wellness and wellbeing-related offers.

## Can tourism operators respond to revenge travelling trend?

Since revenge travel will primarily focus on local destinations, local inbound travel is expected to boom, and boutique hotels and resorts will quickly reach peak occupancy levels. Despite this increase in consumer confidence, the industry is still in a fragile state, with businesses struggling to operate with critical staff shortages due to slow and careful rehiring. Many hospitality operators (airlines, hotels, restaurants and theme parks, for example) are expected to be forced to cut back on operating schedules, and product and service features in order to remain open.

As the highly contagious Delta variant spreads,

more and more travel companies are requiring their employees and guests to show proof of full vaccination. Major airlines, restaurants and even some hotels are implementing policies to protect their employees and customers.

These standard operating procedures (SOPs) and policies are simple to implement, but they are not universally accepted. As the global debate over mandating Covid-19 vaccination continues, both international hospitality operators and travellers are being left in the dark. The following key questions have been raised: What should you do if a customer isn’t immunised? How should unvaccinated employees be handled? Are we willing to establish vaccinated and unvaccinated dining areas? Aircraft cabins for those have been vaccinated and those that have not? Or is it back-of-house duties for unvaccinated employees and front-of-house duties only for vaccinated employees?

In the labour market, there is an expected shift in power from an employer-driven market to a candidate-driven one. Rehiring furloughed employees is expected to be difficult, as many of them have successfully diversified or pivoted during the pandemic. To make matters worse, the highly contagious Delta variant has caused a spike in cases this summer, as well as an increase in hospitalisation. Employers are grappling with the issue of mandating workers (particularly frontline workers) to get vaccinated, knowing that doing so may result not only in some redesignations, terminations or resignations, but may also scare off potential hires.

## What is urgently needed?

On the one hand, tourism is improving, but local communities in tourist areas are concerned about visitors coming from all over the country. They will be more vigilant in requiring tourists to wear masks and observe SOPs. As a result, hospitality operators must remember to be both hospitable and strict. ■

# Virtual reality as an innovative marketing approach in hospitality services

Customers' acceptance of technology allows greater tolerance of technological innovations and affects their readiness for virtual reality videos. The trend is changing, and customers expect more from the services industry, specifically to feed them with more realistic images of the services offered. Virtual reality could be the tool to provide this change. One of the ways is to create user-friendly virtual reality videos that could be viewed by users without the hassle of making any preparation, installation, expertise requirement and so on.

Virtual reality videos can be viewed easily by using any devices that are already part of our lives. With the aid of virtual reality headsets, customers become more immersed in the digital environment and develop deeper connections due to the videos and by interacting with the virtual world. Virtual reality videos could increase customers' engagement by providing real-life pictures with appealing sounds and other physical sensations that enable users to experience moving around virtually. Generally, this approach would be more appealing than using text contents, as it feeds customers with the reality of the services and gives a heads up to customers about what to expect. Through virtual reality videos, customers are not just watching but also interacting and experiencing the services. Customers would prefer videos, as they could feel connected spiritually and wholly by seeing the services in an interesting way. Video content is easily digestible with the fast-moving actions and realistic simulations of the experience. This would help the marketers to retain customers' value in return.

Many travellers often conduct extensive research



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to acquire more information prior to travelling to reduce the risk of having an unpleasant travel experience. This would give travellers a sense of reassurance. Having access to virtual reality videos prior to travel allows travellers to look at the attractions, hotel rooms or airlines seats, which allows them to experience exclusive services of "try before you buy".

The hospitality services industry is quickly adopting virtual reality as one of the marketing communication strategies. Nonetheless, virtual reality could do more than that by creating virtual experience and interaction with the customers and, thus, it is one of the new emerging interactive approaches. Although several hotels and restaurants have created virtual reality videos, many of these videos lack navigation options, and some lack high-definition resolution or realistic feelings.

Hospitality services companies could take the use of virtual reality to the next level by providing more navigation options such as enabling users to make bookings, interact with the video and explore the hotel by providing views of room types, facilities, conference banquet rooms, meal options and the key attractions of the hotel. This virtual reality experience could also include interactive elements that allow guests to feel the reality of the services provided by the hotel or airline. For instance, guests could experience the service attendant's warm welcome with gestures and emotions. Service attendants could also guide guests through the navigation panel and briefly introduce the hotel history. Some interactive buttons could be assigned to trigger welcome messages or short video clips. This would certainly add value to the

basic virtual reality videos.

This virtual reality video is beneficial to not only potential guests but also to online travel agents or event planners. It gives them an idea of the facilities and room types available. They could understand the product and services better and eventually make a more informed choice. Well-equipped third parties could help the hotel boost its sales, and the videos would make it easier for them to make an impact on potential customers.

Further, many hospitality services still lack virtual reality creations such as those presented by airline services. They could showcase their services as well as the tangible goods of seats and spaces, inflight meals, on-board services, and safety precautions. Customers could be shown a comparison of economy- and first-class services, which could help them decide to upgrade from economy to first class. Likewise, virtual reality videos could be used for food and beverage (F&B) services to showcase the menu in a captivating way and encourage impulsive orders. Virtual reality in F&B services is not only used to present the delicious menu but also could be adopted to show how the dishes were made and the details of the ingredients. Further to this, a virtual reality video of the kitchen tour would be an added value by emphasising cleanliness and sanitation to demonstrate the kitchen hygiene.

In marketing, the hospitality services industry strives to show the actual experience to the customers, while in reality endeavouring to provide better customer experience beyond their expectations to increase customer satisfaction. Thus, virtual reality would be one of the many options. **E**

# Selling versus marketing: The evolving role of salespersons post-Covid-19

In the area of sales management, there is a heavy reliance on individual salespersons to “push” a firm’s products. This is termed “personal selling”, and is said to be more focused on close interactions with customers. Personal selling is closely related to relationship management, where building trust is key to serving customers’ long-term interest. On the other hand, marketing management takes a broader approach, where initiatives such as branding and promotions are adopted to reach a target market.

Selling and marketing work hand in hand. Where marketing approaches are analogous to “sowing seeds”, the action of selling would be “tending to individual plants”. Traditional and social media are common avenues to appeal to the mass market. Corporate messaging through these platforms is often in unison with the firm’s direction and strategies. Nonetheless, it is the role of the salesperson to strengthen trust by improving perceptions on brand credibility and reducing information gaps. Hence, the role of the salesperson is pertinent to convert prospects into sales.

However, with the Covid-19 pandemic still raging, the way salespersons conduct business calls for a change. When the first wave of the pandemic occurred, borders were closed and strict social distancing was imposed, forcing numerous firms to jump on the digital bandwagon. The sales of products and services became mediated by non-human platforms, particularly for retailers. Salesperson roles took a backseat because physical retailing had become too costly to sustain (Zahid, SJ, 2020. Covid-19: Malaysian retailers say job cuts, store closures inevitable as “new normal” bites. The Malay Mail). Hence, there is a need to ask: How will the roles of firms, salespersons and consumers evolve post-Covid-19?

Prior to the pandemic, Malaysians were signifi-



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cantly more confident about shopping at bricks-and-mortar stores, where 95% of total retail spending was accounted for (Martin, B, 2019. Can’t beat the brick and mortar stores. The Star). One reason consumers shy away from online platforms is because of the lack of emotional connection. Thus, interactive elements (such as reviews and ratings, chat tools and social media links) are built into these platforms with the purpose of increasing consumer confidence.

As the pandemic recovery stages begin to unfold, consumers are thrust into a “mixed” spending environment, where both physical and online shopping platforms are relevant. However, as salesperson roles resume, consumers are also growing accustomed to online shopping. Therefore, it is expected that post-Covid-19, there will be omnichannel retailing, with consumers interacting with retailers both physically and online. However, it is too early to tell which form of shopping will be preferred.

Salespersons’ skills are central to their respective roles. New selling approaches have been found and honed through the years (Avila & Inks, 2017. The evolution of the sales process: Relationship selling versus “the challenger sale”). One common approach is “hard-selling”, where the salesperson regurgitates a rehearsed script highlighting a product’s features. Today, the salesperson is no longer a mere seller but also one who engages the customer’s long-term interest, delivering a promise. A skilful salesperson is one who is able to communicate effectively, possessing the “right” set of selling skills — which are intangible and part of the salesperson’s personality. This suggests that a salesperson needs to continually develop their skills to stay relevant.

However, as the consumer market scene is evolving owing to the pandemic, traditional selling approaches with the aforementioned skillset may not be as relevant as online shopping becomes more

prevalent. In Malaysia, close to 75% of consumers have become more confident in making purchases on e-commerce platforms (Jaafar, SS, 2020. Over two-thirds of Malaysians now more comfortable shopping online after Covid-19 — StanChart. The Edge).

The pandemic recovery stages and post-Covid-19 have undoubtedly resulted in a transformed business environment. First, it must be noted that online and physical platforms will begin to complement each other to deliver enhanced experiences. Firms may need to review and update their business models, commission policies, salesperson tasks and roles, and sales training. Rigid yet traditional ways of conducting business may no longer be cost-effective.

A post-pandemic era will also reveal which selling platform is more significant — this allows businesses to make accurate investments on either building/strengthening their online strategies, or upskilling salespersons. Nonetheless, the role of salesperson needs to take into account the possible changes in terms of human resource management and technology-assisted programmes.

Sustainable and ethical shopping and selling is likely to remain a trend. The Covid-19 pandemic has birthed a group of consumers who are more ethically aware and environmentally conscious (Latham, K, 2021. Has coronavirus made us more ethical consumers? British Broadcasting Corporation). A few years ago, issues in relation to pollution and worker exploitation caused by “big brands” came to light. Fast fashion is often challenged because of its quick-profit business model while disregarding the environment and workers’ welfare. Ultimately, consumers are becoming brand collaborators, taking part in the co-creation of product and service innovation. Given that, firms need to revisit the customer-salesperson relationship in order to deliver customer value. ■

# The Great Reset In Hospitality Management Education: Identifying The Implications And Opportunities

By Professor Marcus L. Stephenson & Professor Peter Heard

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the tourism industry's contribution to GDP has declined globally by 49.1% since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the Asia Pacific region having the highest decline of 53.7%. This region also accounted for around 34.1 million estimated job losses. Statista reports that hotel occupancy rates reduced dramatically worldwide in 2020. Europe was hardest hit with a decrease of 82.3% from the previous year.

Despite these gloomy facts, the green shoots of a recovery are emerging. Accor, one of the largest hotel operators in Australia and New Zealand, made moves to recruit at least 1,000 new positions across its 400 hotels and is working proactively with higher education institutions to produce hospitality internships. Meanwhile, airlines around the world are gradually expanding the number of seats between destinations and the number of routes, and increasing their labour force accordingly. Ryanair, one of Europe's largest airlines, has revealed plans

to recruit at least 2,000 new pilots over the next three years. Longer term, the International Air Transport Association predicts that by 2037 there could be 8.2 billion passengers compared to 4.5 billion in 2019.

The hospitality industry's future is bright and despite the present crisis there is an industry-based expectation that because significant national populations have not been able to consume the benefits of travel and hospitality for a substantial period of time, hospitality consumption will bounce back with vengeance.

The hospitality industry is adept at turning adversity into market advantage. For instance, the hotel sector has monopolised on the domestic market through producing valued-added staycation packages, restaurants quickly advanced their takeaway services, the event industry became increasingly digitalised, and some airline companies creatively produced alternative revenue streams, such as flights to nowhere for those who love flying and even home delivery of airline food. Singapore Airlines



actually converted aircraft into stationary restaurants. Hospitality is a resilient industry and there are many skills requiring replication and development in hospitality education, instilling students with the values of imagination, open-mindedness and resourcefulness.

Soft skills are the core competencies that individuals require for working successfully in the hospitality industry, and are essential for career achievement. These skills are also vital to navigating challenging times, particularly critical thinking, emotional intelligence, responsiveness and problem solving. Research from Harvard University, the Carnegie Foundation and Stanford Research Center indicated that 85% of job success is derived from soft skills rather than technical skills. Yet the soft and technical skills taught at university are the best insurance for having a productive career.

The recovery of the hospitality industry is unlikely to be a straightforward. Nonetheless,

long term growth is certain, as is the need for a rejuvenated labour force with the right skills. Education is one of the best investments in ensuring future prosperity for individuals and nations. Starting a diploma or degree now will mean that students are perfectly placed to fill vacancies in two to four years' time, when they graduate.

The pandemic has facilitated problematic scenarios for hospitality education to critically address. In revenue management, one challenge concerns how student learners deal with ways to ensure that hotels maximise revenue opportunities from each customer rather fully concentrate on the pre-pandemic principle of optimising occupancy rates. Hospitality education should thus focus on new skills and applied competencies. Students need to be astutely aware of how innovation and entrepreneurship are crucial for full-scale recovery, studying ways to increase revenue but at the same time being imbued with aspirations to change the hospitality industry landscape.

We see interesting trends developing in the industry, signifying how it is being transformed due to the pandemic's impact. For instance, the foodservice sector in the US experienced a rise in AI Fresco dining, which is healthier because of exterior ventilation. We have also witnessed virtual restaurant brands operating out

of "ghost kitchens" – also known as "cloud kitchens" or "virtual kitchens". The pandemic implicated safety regulations as well as environmental and sustainable concerns which are imperative for the industry's future.

Hospitality education should not only consider transformational change in the industry but also how students can be transformational leaders. The School of Hospitality and Service Management at Sunway University is sensitive to the current challenges faced by the industry, working towards ensuring that educational delivery emphasises ways forward at numerous progressive levels. The University's Master degree in International Hospitality Management, that was launched in 2020, deals deeply with appropriate contemporary scenarios and potential industry-based solutions. One core competence to instil in the next generation of hospitality leaders is the capability of allowing the new and changing environment to constructively modify their behaviour patterns and thought processes.

It is now time to lift our focus above the disappointments and difficulties of the last 18 months. As we emerge into the post-COVID world, the long-term future of the hospitality industry looks both bright and exciting! **BT**



# Reinventing Events in a Global Pandemic

The events industry took a hard hit worldwide in the year 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Before the crisis struck, major events such as trade, sporting, and entertainment events depended a lot on international arrivals of delegates, participants, and spectators. Thus, international travel bans, movement control orders, and social distancing policies quickly raised tremendous issues of concern for major event organizers, and event cancellations came in a flood.

The Malaysian Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers (MACEOS) reported an estimated revenue loss of RM2.5 billion from cancelled events. Covid-related cancellations took a huge toll throughout the Asia Pacific region. The Business Events Council of Australia reported a tremendous drop of 96% in national events in Australia during 2020, a country where business events contributed A\$35.7 billion to its economy in the 2018-2019 financial year. Thailand reported an estimated ฿5.6 billion in lost revenue from event marketing businesses in 2020 due to the pandemic. Meanwhile, the global live events industry lost \$30 billion in revenue, with cancellations of live events such as concerts and musicals in 2020, according to concert trade publication Pollstar.

Numerous event firms pivoted their business model to the virtual or hybrid model shortly after Covid-19 surfaced. Hybrid events become more prominent, with many event organizers opting to have their physical event at a downsized scale and simultaneously broadcasting the virtual portion of the event for their international delegates. Live streaming and video conferencing platforms have been able to sustain hybrid and virtual events for the time being. The obvious benefits of live streaming and video conferencing platforms are that such platforms transcend geographical

boundaries and are seen as a safe and dependable solution for event organizers. In Malaysia, The Malaysian Society of Association Executives (MSAE) presented a survey during an August 2020 webinar that was supported by the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) and Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. In this survey, it was reported that at least 70% of associations in Malaysia cancelled their events due to Covid-19 and opted for a change in event format to virtual or hybrid mode. This shows that industry players are willing to shift to another model of hosting and organizing events as long as the business stays afloat and able to withstand the challenging business environment during the pandemic period.

In many ways, hybrid and virtual models are good alternatives to attract international delegates in attending events especially in the years 2020-2021, as many countries have not re-opened their borders for inbound and outbound tourism. However, many industry players stated that while virtual events are helpful as a tool to generate some level of business during the Covid-19 period, live or face-to-face events are preferred, and they will return to hosting and attending live events once everything goes back to normal. Though it can be assumed that this is due to the space and the depth of interaction provided in a typical setup of a live or face-to-face event, hybrid events will continue to develop in the coming years. Indeed, the global events industry as a whole is expected to embrace events that combine in-person experiences with digital components as the new normal.

The silver lining from this pandemic is the accelerated global adoption of tech platforms with more emphasis on improving attendees' experience and raising the efficiency of event organizers in virtual as well as hybrid events. One leading event technology

platform, Bizzabo, announced in their official blog that the company has raised \$138 million funding to create and implement extensive technology that successfully integrates the experiences of virtual, hybrid, and face-to-face events for both organizers and attendees. With this investment, Bizzabo has set a record for private investment in an event technology platform. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, Livescape Group and Hitman Solutions are reimagining live events. Late last year, they launched an immersive in-car haunted house experience (an IP known as Icebox) that is compliant with Malaysian social distancing guidelines, and an event ecosystem that can go beyond the pandemic. Livescape Group invested RM500,000 to develop this in-car experience and aims to extend it to other regions based on its success.

Covid-19 is undoubtedly a notorious setback in the global events ecosystem, but if anything, the pandemic is 'tutoring' global event players to be resilient and creative in sustaining their businesses. New approaches to events are exploding on the world stage, and such adaptations will likely determine the sustainability of the events industry in the years to come. ■



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## Zentraler Wirtschaftszweig: Tourismus in Vanuatu



Ankunft Kreuzfahrtschiff in Port Vila  
© Alexander Trupp u. Kosita Butratana



Vulkan bei Nacht  
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Der südpazifische Inselstaat Vanuatu besticht durch kulturelle und natürliche Ressourcen und Attraktionen, die in den letzten Jahren mehr und mehr das Interesse internationaler Touristen, allen voran aus den Hauptquellmärkten Australien, Neuseeland und dem benachbarten Neukaledonien, erweckten. Vor der Corona-Pandemie zählte Vanuatu im Jahr 2018 ca. 120.000 internationale Fluggäste und 235.000 Kreuzfahrtpassagiere. Der Überhang des Kreuzfahrttourismus in Vanuatu bedeutet aber auch, dass der Großteil der internationalen Besucher\*innen gar nicht im Land übernachten und nur ein sehr kleiner Teil ihrer Reiseausgaben bei der lokalen Bevölkerung ankommt. Trotzdem hat sich der Tourismus zur wichtigsten wirtschaftlichen Grundlage des Landes entwickelt. Der geschätzte Anteil des Tourismus am BIP liegt bei 45% und mehr als jede dritte Beschäftigung steht im Zusammenhang mit dem Tourismus und Fremdenverkehr. Dies bringt allerdings auch wirtschaftliche Abhängigkeiten mit sich, die sich nicht zuletzt während der derzeitigen Corona-Krise offenbaren. Weitere Herausforderungen für die Tourismusedwicklung stellen die Bedrohungen durch Naturgefahren (Zyklone, Tsunamis, Erdbeben, Vulkanausbrüche) dar sowie die Veräußerung von indigenen Landrechten für touristische Zwecke.

Darüber hinaus ist die Tourismusedwicklung im Land sehr ungleich verteilt, wobei sich der Großteil der touristischen Übernachtungen in der Hauptstadt Port Vila auf der Hauptinsel Efate konzentriert. Die attraktive Haupt- und Hafenstadt ist nicht nur Hauptangelpunkt für internationale Flug- und Kreuzfahrtschiffpassagiere, sondern auch Ziel für Yachten aus aller Welt. Besucher\*innen in Port Vila erleben melanesische, englische, französische und asiatische Einflüsse, internationale Restaurants, lokale Kava-Bars, ein ethnologisches Museum und bunte Märkte, die Gemüse, Obst und vor allem Souvenirs und Handarbeiten anbieten. Das touristische Interesse an Holzschnitzereien, Handarbeiten (z.B. Handtaschen, Matten oder Hüte aus Pandanus/Schraubenpalmen) und lokalen Malereien führte zur Entstehung von zahlreichen Kleinstunternehmen. Auf den Märkten sind viele Frauen zu sehen, die Handarbeiten sowohl produzieren als auch verkaufen und so zu den Haupt-Geldverdienerinnen ihrer Familien wurden.

Um der Nachfrage nach Souvenirs – vor allem von Kreuzfahrttouristen – nachzukommen sowie den Biosecurity-Importregelungen Australiens gerecht zu werden, verzichten heute allerdings viele Geschäfte auf lokal hergestellte Handarbeiten und importieren zunehmend massengefertigte Souvenirs aus Asien. Um diesem Trend von importierten Souvenirprodukten entgegenzutreten, wurde 2017 ein neuer zentraler Markt mit ca. 50 Verkaufsständen an der zentral gelegenen Uferpromenade eröffnet, der eine Bandbreite an ausschließlich lokal hergestellten Produkten anbietet. Während das touristische Interesse einerseits die Aufwer-



tung und Bewahrung von Kunst und Handarbeit fördert, führt es gleichzeitig auch zur weiteren Kommerzialisierung und Trivialisierung.

Eine der Hauptattraktionen in Vanuatu sind die Bewohner\*innen selbst und ihre kulturellen Praktiken. So wurde zum Beispiel das *Nagol*<sup>17</sup>, Urform des Bungee-Jumpings auf der Insel Pentecost, zu einem Tourismusmagneten. Das Ritual ist Teil eines Yamsfestes und wurde gegen Eintritt für Touristen geöffnet, die das Spektakel zumeist mit teuren Pauschaltrips von der Hauptstadt aus besuchen.

Auch auf anderen Inseln des Landes werden *Village-* oder *Kastom Tours* organisiert, wo Besucher\*innen ein selektiver und teils touristifizierter Einblick in Lebensweisen der Bewohner\*innen geboten wird. Während die Folklorisierung und Kommerzialisierung von Zeremonien und Kultur kritisiert werden kann, bietet diese Form von Ethnotourismus eine der wenigen Einnahmequellen, vor allem auf abgelegeneren Inseln, und durchaus Möglichkeiten für einen selbstbestimmten gemeindeorientierten Tourismus, wo die lokale Bevölkerung selbst über deren kulturelle Repräsentation entscheidet.

Vanuatus 83 Inseln verfügen natürlich auch über traumhafte Strände und Tauch-Hotspots wie etwa dem *SS President Coolidge*, ein gesunkenes Wrack eines US-amerikanischen Kriegsschiffes nahe der Insel Espiritu Santo. Vulkanlandschaften stellen eine weitere ganz besondere Attraktion in Vanuatu dar. Insbesondere der Yasur-Vulkan auf der Insel Tanna zieht mittlerweile Besucher\*innen aus der ganzen Welt an. Eine Tour zum immer-aktiven und leicht zugänglichen Stratovulkan führt bis hin zum Kraterrand mit Blick in das Magma und Asche ausstoßenden Vulkanschlund. Dieses Naturschauspiel bleibt für die meisten Besucher\*innen ein unvergessliches Erlebnis.

COVID-19 hat die Tourismusentwicklung im März 2020 abrupt unterbrochen. Die nationale Tourismusorganisation wirbt derzeit mit dem Slogan: *We 'll keep it beautiful for you*. Vanuatus Einzigartigkeit wird wieder viele Touristen ins Land locken und der Balanceakt zwischen Kultur und Kommerz sowie Naturtourismus und Nachhaltigkeit ein schwieriger bleiben.



*kastom* Show für Tourist\*innen  
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Holzfigur © Alexander Trupp  
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### Folgen der Corona-Pandemie für den Inselstaat

Vanuatu ist einer der wenigen Staaten ohne Covid-19-Infektionen (Stand September 2020). Die Regierung hat sich Ende März für eine radikale Schließung der Grenzen entschlossen, da das staatliche Gesundheitswesen bei einem Ausbruch nichts entgegensetzen könnte. Die Coronakrise hat massive negative Folgen auf die Wirtschaft. Durch den kompletten Zusammenbruch des Tourismus entfällt die Haupteinnahmequelle, es gibt keine Devisen mehr, die Hotelanlagen verweisen. Die Angestellten im Tourismus sind wieder in die Dörfer zurückgegangen. Es werden keine Kreuzfahrtschiffe in der nächsten Zeit erlaubt werden.

<sup>17</sup> dt. Landtauchen, mehr hierzu im Beitrag "Vanuatu – in mehrfacher Hinsicht ein besonderer Inselstaat"

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