

# THE POWER OF THE COLLECTIVE

EPISODE 05 - Part II

**THE BUYERS HAVE SPOKEN:**  
HOW TO DELIVER THE EXPERIENCES YOUR  
CUSTOMERS WANT, RIGHT NOW



Our inaugural Buyer Panel gathered a line-up of L.E/Miami's all-star agents, who revealed what their clients are demanding as travel begins to open up around the world. The follow-up session called on our exhibitors and buyers to explore how to actually deliver these experiences to travel-starved clients. If you've been asking yourself the same question, dive into the discussion's top takeaways below.

# MANAGING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS.

**THE HOT TAKE:** Hotels and suppliers need to be ultra-transparent with agents about how they are operating post-COVID – from what facilities are open (i.e. kids clubs, pools) to regional regulations and F&B offerings. Making this crystal clear helps agents manage client expectations.

## IF YOU'RE A...BUYER:

### Get super personal.

We know you do this anyway, but reaching out to clients individually is the only way to truly achieve personalised service – and establish exactly what each client cares about, post-COVID. “The personal touch matters now more than ever,” affirmed Rebecca. Some clients are highly risk-averse, while others will be happy to high-five everyone they meet. Either way, you’ll be tailoring your comms accordingly – “it’s important to make sure both nervous and relaxed travellers are comfortable,” agreed one of our buyers.



### Bureaucracy is your friend.

Post-COVID planning = more paperwork than ever, but it’s crucial to push past the red tape and get straight answers from those in the know, i.e. health ministers, local authorities and airports. Go straight to the source, and nowhere else.

### Maximise summer (and the outdoors).

While the spas, indoor pools and gyms your clients crave may be unavailable at the moment, you can work with suppliers to get creative. Most activities can be taken outside and be done at a distance, like personal training at the beach or in a park.

## IF YOU'RE A...HOTEL OR DMC:

### Get creative with communicating protocols.

PDFs are great, but videos are better. We know budgets are tighter than ever, but if creative communications are your jam, a quick social-friendly video was suggested by our buyers as an effective tool for reassuring clients of your latest health and safety measures.



### Go the extra mile when communicating with buyers.

Agents will take their cues from you, so keeping them up-to-date with the latest developments is critical. A list of what's open is the bare minimum, but our buyers would also like to hear about your destination, and for hotels to offer itineraries with what travellers can do in the local area as different destinations reopen at different rates. "The hotels need to add this extra touch, not just what's going on in the hotel," one buyer opined.

### Stay authentic, whatever that looks like for you.

Let's face it: many new sanitary requirements make it harder for properties to stay true to their brand ethos, essential as they are. But there are still things you can do to stay true to your brand identity whilst introducing additional sanitary measures. If your focus is wellness, spa treatments can be given on patios or terraces; if guests are missing the gym, event spaces can be hired out as private yoga studios. Everyone in our session agreed that glass-separators are more customer-friendly than masks, for example. "Keeping an authentic experience throughout all this is the main focus," commented one hotel owner.



# KEEPING YOUR DISTANCE.

**THE HOT TAKE:** From ‘jetpooling’ to private islands, people are finding new and unexpected ways to stay safe and maintain social distancing while fulfilling their desire to travel.

## IF YOU'RE A...BUYER:

### Stay up-to-date as countries reopen.

Keep your finger on the pulse as borders reopen to travellers. Right now, European countries – particularly France and Spain – are looking most promising, but this changes hourly. Our buyers recommended keeping abreast of “green shoots close to home,” as travellers seek proximity over almost everything else.

### With summer camps closed, focus on family travel.

“While camps are closed, people want something to do with their kids that is safe and outdoors,” one buyer observed. Other families want to reunite in private villas or for those in the ultra 1%, on private islands.

### Drivable destinations are the ones-to-watch.

As above, proximity is key, and all our buyers have found their clients are willing to drive further than ever before, for the privacy they’re seeking, so suggesting destinations slightly outside their usual comfort zone may be a good idea.

## IF YOU'RE A...HOTEL OR DMC:

Be open about health and safety, but keep it sexy – for leisure travellers.

Our buyers have found there's a fine line between staying informed, and too much information. "It's possible hotels are talking about health and safety too much – and it could put people off who aren't as concerned (i.e. part of a younger demographic)", one warned. A good rule of thumb is to give agents a thorough debriefing, but keep customer comms top-line and reassuring. If particular clients ask for specifics around health and safety, then you can provide those directly to them, upon request.

For corporate and entertainment clients, there's no such thing as too much information.

While business travel is lagging right now, entertainment (such as film shoots) is starting to slowly pick up again. "These clients are looking for the best policies around – there's no such thing as too much information," agreed one entertainment buyer. Cleaning policies are particularly relevant for this crowd, so be as thorough and specific with your comms as you possibly can.



When it comes to privacy, it's all in the details.

Valet parking, room service, pool availability, private chefs – when it comes to privacy concerns, agents and clients want to know how you're handling literally all of it. A hand-sanitiser in the lobby and more in-room dining options just isn't going to cut it – you need to have an answer for every eventuality.