

# THE OVERVIEW

ISSN 2048-4844

JULY ISSUE 2021

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## Cry freedom-day postponed

As fully reopening is delayed, how well  
will the sector cope? P10

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Rebuild and reinspire: Labour in the sector P14



# Welcome to THE OVERVIEW

**T**he trouble with branding is that it is great in your mind, but it doesn't always work in practice. So it was for the UK's fluffy-haired leader and 'freedom day'. Other than it being a pretty loaded sort of a name, it seems a funny thing to brand, but then this is a government with a need to turn everything into an event. Or if you'd rather, psychodrama.

So with everything at stake it was never going to end well and indeed the restrictions didn't. At the time of writing Matt Hancock had commented that it was unlikely hospitality could fill its boots on the early date of 5 July, with high hopes for 19 July.

The sector has been greeted with a shrug of the shoulders by the government, despite it having now had more than a year of everyone in the industry shouting directly at it. Rather than revealing a support package as they announced that venues were set to drag on with tiny

volumes of guests - or not at all - the government was silent.

UKHospitality has estimated that the four-week delay to lifting restrictions will cost the sector around £3bn in sales, put at risk 300,000 jobs and have a knock-on impact on bookings throughout the summer and into the autumn.

As CGA reported this month, the independent licensed sector in particular is vulnerable, with only 66.9% of its venues open by the end of May, compared to 93.1% of managed sites.

Across hospitality, it is the independent sector where the wealth of inspiration and innovation is found. Where lifelong dreams are realised. And where the most risk is taken by the fewest.

A lack of support means that many of these, and other, businesses will close, or never reopen again. It also means that many people will deterred from entering the sector at all, a cost which will be felt for longer.

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# Kind hearts & hair nets

HOSPA CEO Jane Pendlebury asks for some consideration on all sides as the sector gradually reopens.

Hospitality has been missed over the past 15 months or so. The simple pleasure and convenience of grabbing a coffee from a café, the sociable interaction of a drink with friends at a bar, spending time away from the routine of home on holiday – all of these were taken for granted before the pandemic began. No one would've anticipated these straightforward enjoyments ever being restricted as we moved into 2020.

Now though, many months later and with that very thing having happened, people have a new-found appreciation for hospitality. Or so I thought ahead of reopening, at least. Now, I'm not so sure. I do believe this to be true to an extent, but I'm shocked and horrified by the negative experiences of front-end staff. Hospitality businesses have been missed and people are delighted to be back to some form of normal, however the way many staff are being treated you'd be forgiven for thinking otherwise.

I understand that expectations from guests are high. People have been waiting for what has often felt like an interminable amount of time. And having finally been given the green light to meet friends in a restaurant or to stay overnight in a hotel, people are eagerly anticipating the perfect evening out or weekend away. Naturally, it's in our best interests to welcome guests back and deliver the wonderful experience that they've been yearning for. Most of us working in hospitality have the desire to exceed expectations so deeply rooted within us that it's effectively second nature. Little or no effort is required to smile and to endeavour to address the needs and wants of our guests, however demanding they might be. Hoteliers rise to challenges day in, day out and take pride in the successful resolution of any issues.

Given the desire is there on both sides – for guests to have a good time and for staff to deliver one – this reopening period should be joyous. It should be happy faces

all round, from the guests to those serving them and everyone working behind the scenes too, who are all just as excited to be back.

From what I'm hearing though, this simply isn't happening. Guests are coming away disappointed. Staff are ending up in tears. Where has it all gone wrong?

It's easy for us who work in hospitality to see it from both sides. We are the privileged ones who understand that front-end staff have been away from work for so long, and that there is a nervousness about going back into work and likely straight into a series of very busy shifts. They have their own concerns about the virus and the new way of working, while quite often they'll have new colleagues to interact with. Much of what was familiar to them has now changed. A huge issue, and cause of many problems, is the massive shortage of staff. So many good people have left the industry during the pandemic – a situation that's been compounded by the restrictions on freedom of movement as the result of Brexit.

Many of our guests don't want to be reminded that there are new rules and regulations to abide by. They just want to have a good time. They don't want to follow a one-way system to the bathroom, or have to turn back because they've forgotten to put on a mask. They certainly don't want to be reminded – by someone they don't know – to observe these new measures. No-one really enjoys being told what to do, after all, not least when they are out having fun.

What we can do though, as employers, is to empower our teams with confidence. Give your teams some key phrases to use when talking to difficult guests about the new restrictions. Encourage them to speak up and if the smile isn't coming naturally, then to fake it until they make it. Even with masks on, it's evident from our eyes when we are smiling so they mustn't fall into the trap of thinking their expressions are hidden and should always

act like their face is in full view. Employers though, should also understand when staff are doing that. It's by no means easy to keep smiling even though it's a given of our trade, so praise them, thank them and appreciate this additional, new hard work.

Both employers and guests perhaps need to be reminded that some visitors and staff remain super cautious about the virus. Some people will be constantly looking out for their own safety, whilst others – probably a growing group as those wearing their double vaccination label increases hour by hour – are fed up and are less inclined to respect the rules and guidelines. Both sides have their own reasons for viewing things as they do, and we should be wary of judging anyone – be they cautious or cavalier – but we do need to highlight the rules where necessary.

I don't think there is any harm reminding our guests that the team serving them are working hard to give them the best experience – but that there are new processes that are still being learned. Signage with humour is great. Lots of friendly reminders that COVID restrictions are not imposed by today's receptionist or waiter but are coming from a much higher power!

Above all though, be kind – a phrase that has been worn out by its constant use – but BE KIND. How can we get that message out to the wider public? Consider putting just that 'Be Kind' on your signs and on your menus too! We're all delighted to be back open and trading, but everyone has to adjust. The pandemic has affected each and every one of us in different ways and we all need to be mindful of that and considerate of others. One day soon we can hopefully see the remaining restrictions lifted, but in the meantime, we all need to work together to make that possible.

**Jane Pendlebury**

**HOSPA CEO**

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# Meet the HOSPA Learners of the Year for 2020!

This month we catch up with two of our prize winners from 2020.

**L**eanda and Amy have both been studying on the HOSPA courses in Revenue Management and Leanda has been awarded the HOSPA 2020 'Outstanding Achievement Award', whilst Amy achieved the highest overall grades for Level 3 Revenue Management which she completed in February 2020. The awards were presented at our Virtual Awards Ceremony in January 2021.

## Leanda Laughey

Leanda Laughey has been studying on our courses in Revenue Management and in 2019 she achieved the highest set of results for the year based on her studies for Level 1 and Level 2 and achieved a very high grade for Level 3, hence, obtaining this special award.

Leanda is starting a new role as Revenue Office Manager at the Park Inn Hotel, Northampton. At the time of her HOSPA studies Leanda was working as a Revenue Manager for Coombe Abbey Hotel near Coventry.

Leanda began her professional life in 2007 with a BA (Hons) Event Management from the University Institute of Wales, Cardiff. Her first role was as Conference & Events Sales Executive at the Hilton Cardiff. Leanda explains:

"I was Conference Manager at Coombe Abbey and then went on maternity leave, I was about to return when the position of Revenue Manager became available and I was asked if I would consider it. I had been interested in the revenue career path so the timing was perfect. I suggested that I do the HOSPA Revenue Management course so that I could learn the theory alongside doing the role. Whilst I had gained some understanding



## Amy Braund

Amy Braund is currently Head of Sales at Bingham Riverhouse Hotel. Before completing her HOSPA studies Amy achieved BSc (Hons) Degree in Sport Development with Coaching (graduated 2008) and a Certificate in Hospitality & Event Management (Rosen College of Hospitality – University of Central Florida).

Amy explains how she first joined the hospitality industry:

"Like a lot of people after leaving University I thought "what on earth do I do now". I found an exciting opportunity to work at Walt Disney World in Florida through their graduate programme and before I knew it, I was on a plane over there to work as Concierge at one of their top resorts on property. It was a 6 month programme that also included studying Hospitality Management at UCF.

It was from that moment I knew hospitality was for me and so when I returned to the UK I just started applying for any hotel jobs I could get. The joy from providing exceptional guest service is a feeling like no other and making those moments for people. Having Disney on my CV was a huge help in getting my foot through the door in the UK and the first role I was offered was as a trainee manager where the plan was for me to take on 3 months in each role from reception to kitchen, events, housekeeping etc.

When I started as the trainee manager my role for the first few months was reception as well as working in the events office looking after everything from weddings to corporate meetings. An opportunity arose for me to take on the main role as events co-ordinator.



of the concepts throughout my career, it's been hugely beneficial to learn the theory and really develop my skills. It's given me the confidence to challenge existing processes and develop my own, leading my hotel to become much more Total Revenue focussed. I want to continue building my knowledge and experience in Revenue and use that to further develop my career in hotels."

The HOSPA team would like to congratulate Leanda and we are very proud of her achievements!

Admittedly not something I had ever thought of before but absolutely loved it. After a couple of years, I then moved down to London and took on a wedding co-ordinator role in a much larger hotel. I always had a natural passion for reaching targets and conversion, seeing all the hard work we were doing as a team to bring the money in was exciting.

As opportunities develop, I then went back to work for the Walt Disney Company on the Cruise Line and ended up as Guest Services Manager.

Upon return to the UK, I then found Bingham Riverhouse where I was again offered the role as wedding & events co-ordinator. With it being a privately owned hotel, I was able to come into my own and get involved with decision making when it came to how to increase sales. This then led to being offered the role of Sales & Events Manager predominantly looking after the sales from the events side of the business.

Now here I am! After a difficult year

in the industry, many changes came into place at Bingham Riverhouse with a shakeup of the team and I am now Head of Sales where I oversee all revenue coming into the business from f&b, bedrooms, events, membership and spa.

The HOSPA revenue management course is absolutely the reason I am where I am now. I always had the passion for the numbers and the motivation to make as much as possible for the business. I had bits of background knowledge, but the course really allowed me to get an understanding of revenue as a whole in each department as well as combined to try and achieve the maximum amount of revenue possible.

The promotion to head of sales (especially during this time) is truly an honour and for me one of the biggest recognitions I could get after completing the course.

Moving forward I'd like to continue on the path I am on in revenue. I have found something I really enjoy doing in

an environment and sector that aims to provide happiness – that is a nice feeling. It has always been my dream to work for Disney again and also to live by the ocean in a much warmer climate than the UK, so I'd love someday to take this role over to a large resort perhaps on the beach!"

To join the next intake for the HOSPA programmes in Financial Management and Revenue Management visit:

<https://www.hospa.org/finance-revenue-programmes>

For more information about the HOSPA Awards Ceremony visit:

<https://www.hospa.org/learner-profiles>

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<https://www.hospa.org/hospa-membership>



The Hospitality Professionals Association  
Professional Development

## Learn more about Revenue Management with HOSPA

This **modular programme** is delivered online and provides an opportunity to study in-depth the revenue management strategies and techniques applicable to the hospitality sector. You will benefit from:

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- ✓ Up-to-date web based course materials
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# Apple Announces Support for Digital Keys in Apple Wallet

You glide past the front desk, you know your room number. No one stops you. You belong here. You emerge from the lift and head straight to your room. You press your phone against the lock. The door opens. Has the dream finally turned into a reality?

Every June, Apple unveils its latest software improvements for its devices. Monday, 7th June marked the beginning of the company's Worldwide Developers Conference, and Apple's virtual keynote included details of what's coming to iPhones, iPads, Macs and Apple Watches later this year.

While there are loads of new features included in the new iOS 15 the one we have all been waiting for is being able to save Digital Keys to Apple Wallet enabling the use of NFC to open a hotel lock. For the cynical among us did Apple drag their feet on purpose to allow everyone to waste time and resources on Apps using Bluetooth Low Energy? BLE will now become just another footnote in the technology history books.

We have had the ability to allow guests to use their 'phones as door keys for several years using BLE. The drawback with BLE is that the guest had to download an App to receive a digital key and use it to open the door. Although for the tech savvy amongst us downloading an App is second nature, to many it was seen as a barrier to adoption of Digital

Keys within hospitality.

Apple Wallet, despite its late entry into the mobile wallet scene (launched as Apple Passbook in late 2012), has performed well due to its tight integration with Apple's ecosystem and steady enhancements. Wallet is now an integral cog in Apple's wheel of services and upcoming feature updates will only strengthen its appeal.

Apple Wallet is also incorporating ID cards, such as driving licences. However, this feature is restricted to certain US states for now, but it'll be interesting to see if it makes it further afield. Apple apparently says the US Transportation Security Authority (TSA) is already working on how to accept it.

There has also been a lot of hype about Ultra-Wide Band (UWB) support. This means you don't necessarily need to remove your phone from your bag if UWB is supported. UWB is already used with Apple Car Key to unlock a car, such as selected BMW models. The truth is UWB uses a different frequency to RFID so unless the large chains like Hilton who have already started installing RFID locks in the last couple of years are willing to rip out and start again NFC will be the dominant protocol. It looks like we have had our VHS versus Betamax moment.

So, what does this all mean? This is good news for the industry and will mean there is finally a way forward for Digital Key that everyone can get behind. Love or hate Apple once they set the standard everyone gets on board.

We knew eventually that Apple would unlock the NFC chip so it was already built into our software development road map and all our locks support Digital Keys stored in Apple wallet. We hope to make the necessary software changes by the end of the year and I'm sure other vendors will do so as well. Not wanting to be left out Google will follow suit with Google Pay so any Android users can use Digital Keys as well.

Of course, the elephant in the room is that most hotels are still operating on magnetic card locks, will this be the final nail in the coffin? I doubt it, the industry seems unable to let Magnetic Card die due to the capital expenditure required to finally bury it once and for all.



## About the author

Andrew Evans is the Chief Executive Office of Keystep Solutions a leading supplier of door access systems for hospitality. He has written several white papers on fire safety and door locking systems in the hospitality environment. He can be contacted by email at [andrew.evans@keystep.co.uk](mailto:andrew.evans@keystep.co.uk) if you would like any more information.

Of course, the elephant in the room is that most hotels are still operating on magnetic card locks, will this be the final nail in the coffin?



# Hypnotherapy: More Than a New Age Trend

Hypnosis as a form of healing is one of the oldest forms of therapy on the planet and should be an integral part of your wellness offering...

**C**ertain sections of the wellbeing media are calling hypnotherapy the new wellness trend for 2021.

However, many hotels, including the Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong and the Four Seasons New York, have been offering it as part of their wellbeing packages and luxury spa offerings for many years now.

So, it's hardly new. And despite the stereotype of it being a 'fringe' therapy it's hardly new age neither.

The so-called 2021 trend, however, like most things over the past 16 months or so, has been fuelled by COVID-19 and the various stresses and strains it has engendered. But, what exactly is hypnotherapy and how can it help you?

Hypnotherapy is therapy conducted in a state of hypnosis. And there are different therapies for different things, depending on what it is that you would like to achieve. You can have hypnotherapy for stress and burnout, for anxiety or depression, for anger management, confidence building, relaxation, weight control, pain control, stopping smoking and more. You can even cure warts with it.

Whatever the therapy is, the important thing is it is conducted in a hypnotic state. The term itself is from the Greek word 'hypnos,' meaning sleep. But, this is a misnomer as you are not asleep. Hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness, very similar to daydreaming, nodding off, or losing yourself in a really good book.

And it's been around for thousands of years. It was even practised in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece. The sick and the weary would take themselves off to sleep temples. Whilst there, temple priests would lull them into a

trance-like state, there to give them positive suggestions, benedictions, and invocations via the gods.

As a more modern form of medical practice, hypnotherapy still has a history going back hundreds of years. Before the advent of anaesthesia, it was the main (and very effective) form of pain control for surgery. It was either that, or a bottle of whiskey and a very big stick to bite on.

Hypnotherapy fell from favour when hypnosis became a vaudevillian form of entertainment (all that bark like a dog and cluck like a chicken malarkey). But hypnotherapy for healing and hypnosis for entertainment are two very different things. But, sadly, for a while, the reputation of the latter tarnished the legacy of the former.

Fast forward to today, and clinical hypnotherapy is an evidence-based practice with many applications. Typing the term into Google reveals oodles of interesting headlines, including "Is your willpower failing? I tried hypnotherapy – and it worked almost too well (The Guardian); "Needle phobia treatment could reduce COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy by 10%" (Happiful Magazine); "Could hypnotherapy for weight loss actually work? Here's what the experts want to know" (Yahoo Style UK); "I feel fantastic after my final hypnotherapy session" (Multiple Sclerosis News Today) and 'Inspired by Olivia Coleman? How hypnotherapy could help you tackle your fears, from flying to spiders" (The Independent).

With all the flight-restrictions still in place, hypnosis is even being used to help take people on virtual holidays. This is not as weird as it sounds as celebrity hypnotherapist Paul McKenna was offering hypno-holidays in a special booth set up in Bluewater Shopping Centre as far back as 2015.

As a form of treatment, hypnotherapy has been endorsed by the British Medical Association since 1892. By way of an update, it issued The Hypnotism Act, which provided hypnotherapy with a legal definition, in 1952. The National Hypnotherapy Society, meanwhile, is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). So, in terms of government legitimacy, it sits right up there with the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

Meanwhile, hypnotherapist Nicole Hernandez, who has been with the Four Seasons Hotel New York Downtown since December 2020, offers reassuringly expensive hypnotherapy journeys, either as bespoke one-offs or as four-session programmes.

Whilst over at the Mandarin Spa, Christine Deschemin offers a very similar deal, and can help you become slimmer, more relaxed and, even, addiction free (for lots of Hong Kong dollars, obviously).

Which rather begs the question: is hypnotherapy part of your wellness offering?

If it isn't, I know of a very skilled hypnotherapist who has been in practice for nearly 20 years, who could help you out in that department.

## About the author

Daniel Fryer is a mental health and wellbeing expert and the founder of workplace wellness consultancy, How To Be. He uses rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT), clinical hypnotherapy and positive psychology to help people achieve their goals. Daniel is the author of *The Four Thoughts That F\*ck You Up ...And How To Fix Them*, published by Penguin Random House.

# Cry for freedom day

The rise of the Delta variant has meant that plans to pull back from a full opening of hospitality have been postponed for four weeks, with no plans to support the sector further.

**M**ore than 45 companies in the hospitality sector have written to the government following the extension to the Covid-19 roadmap.

Led by Sacha Lord, Night Time Economy Adviser for Greater Manchester, the letter includes signatories such as Chris Jowsey, CEO of pub chain Admiral Taverns; Peter Marks, CEO, Rekom Nightclubs; Michael Kill, CEO, Night Time Industries Association; William Lees-Jones, MD, JW Lees Brewery; Rob Pitcher, CEO Revolution Bars; Harry Hastings, CEO, Ocean Holidays; the UK Weddings Taskforce and the Wedding Venues Support Group. The letter reads as follows:

“We wish to put you on notice that Mr Lord and the representatives with whom he is in discussion are jointly considering taking legal action to challenge the government, should the easing of restrictions fail to take place on 19 July as promised.”

“All of these industries have suffered enormously due to the repeated closures and reopenings, the ongoing lack of certainty, draconian social distancing measures and the illogical rules implemented and then removed, as areas have grappled with the constantly changing tier systems, and the local and national lockdowns.”

“The restrictions with which these businesses have had to comply have often been entirely illogical and arbitrary in nature, and demonstrate a complete lack of understanding of how their various sectors function.”

“It has been impossible for the affected sectors to operate anywhere near their pre-Covid levels, and for each day that the Covid restrictions remain in place, sectors such as hospitality ... continue to suffer enormous losses.”

“The treatment of these sectors’ employees and business owners is deplorable and cannot continue.

Industries such as Hospitality, Events, Exhibitions and Travel simply cannot endure further hardship.”

Lord commented: “As of the end of the month, we’ll not only see a 10% increase in furlough contributions, but the relief rate for hospitality drops from 100% to 66%. Factor in that huge parts of the nightlife sector are not even open yet, and we have a clear and inevitable crisis about to take place. We demand absolute confirmation we will reopen on the 19 July and we need urgent financial support to give businesses the best possible chance to survive until then.

UKHospitality urged the government to waste no time in providing details of how it would safeguard the future of thousands of venues and hundreds of thousands of jobs. It called for clear,

comprehensive measures to ensure an end to the lockdown, with a particular need to counter the impact of the resumption of business rates payments in July.

UKHospitality Chief Executive Kate Nicholls said: “The decision to delay is hugely disappointing but the government has judged the evidence and acted as it sees fit. It does, however, jeopardise the return on investment that the government has afforded hospitality and it’s crucial that further support is announced to push us over the line.

“The hospitality sector has already lost more than £87bn in sales in the pandemic leaving businesses deeply in debt and at risk of suffering “economic long Covid” without further support. Our businesses face incredible levels of debt and will now face a huge cost hike, with business rates



payments set to recommence and rent accruals due at the end of the month. A swift indication that the business rates holiday will be extended would go a long way to bringing succour to a battered sector - paying any amount of tax while still unable to trade viably would save businesses and, in turn, tax receipts in longer term.

"This four-week delay to lifting restrictions will cost the sector around £3 billion in sales, put at risk 300,000 jobs and have a knock-on impact on bookings throughout the summer and into the autumn. Simply put, if the supports provided by the Chancellor are not sustained and adjusted, businesses will fail and getting this far will count for nought.

"A final lifting of restrictions is the only way to save the sector from disaster and enable it to play its part in a national economic recovery, to support the Government's Jobs Plan, delivering jobs, growth and investment at pace and across all the regions. A single ray of light is that the limit on weddings will be lifted but support must be granted and, crucially, delivered, to the vast majority of other hospitality businesses. Not least, it must reach those who are still unable to trade at all, including nightclubs and those who still cannot operate their main income streams, such as soft play centres, as well as businesses such as contract catering, who operate from other businesses venues and so have been unable to access many reliefs and grants.

"Businesses need a swift, publicly-stated commitment that such support will be in place in the event of any delays, giving them much-needed reassurance after more than 15 months of closure and severely disrupted trading. Hospitality is desperate to get back to what it does best and can play a key role in the economic recovery of the UK - but only once it is given permission to trade freely. The Prime Minister asked for one more heave to get us out of restrictions - hospitality, too, requires one last heave, to be able to drive recovery."

Around 25,000 licensed premises were still shut at the end of May 2021, according to the latest edition of the Market Recovery Monitor research from CGA and AlixPartners, and the delay to a complete reopening of hospitality puts a significant number of them at risk of permanent closure.

The research showed that 76.2% of Britain's licensed sites were trading by the end of last month, with the number more than doubling from April's total of 32.9% thanks to the return of inside service. However, while more than nine in 10 venues in segments including food pubs (91.9%), high street pubs (92.9%) and casual dining restaurants (93.9%) were now open, figures were much lower in sectors that relied on late-night trading, like nightclubs (49.9%) and bars (72.9%).

With strict restrictions including distancing and table service in place, CGA's trading data shows that sales have been well below pre-Covid-19 levels in these segments in particular. The four-week delay to a full easing of trading restrictions in England until 19 July, with Scotland likely to follow a similar path, placed many closed businesses in jeopardy of failure.

Karl Chessell, CGA's director for hospitality operators and food, EMEA, said: "Britain already has nearly 10,000 fewer licensed premises than before the pandemic, and that number will sadly rise as a result of the government's delay. Coming as it does on top of a mountain of challenges on debt, tax, rising costs, recruitment and much more, hospitality now deserves sustained financial backing to save thousands of businesses and jobs, and the government's extension of the ban on commercial evictions of tenants is a welcome first step. The hospitality sector's

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recovery is central to the UK's economic revival, and more support like this is vital if we are to prevent further casualties."

Graeme Smith, managing director at AlixPartners, said: "Many operators will have reopened in anticipation of restrictions falling away on 21 June, and likely forecast and accepted suppressed trade for the period up to that point. While far from ideal, knowing that 'Freedom Day' was on the horizon meant operators could battle through this challenging time, perhaps welcoming team members back to the business in anticipation and getting operations up to speed. A further delay of four weeks is a devastating blow, creating significant uncertainty and further financial strain. At a time when Euro 2020 is in full swing and there is a feelgood factor across the country, this extension to restrictions could not have come at a worse time for pubs and other drink-led venues."

One area where there has at least been a postponement is that of rents, with new rules to ringfence Covid-19 commercial rent arrears and the extension of measures to protect commercial tenants from evictions until March next year.

UKHospitality estimated there were currently around £2.5bn in rent arrears built up by hospitality firms during the course of the pandemic.

Nicholls said: "These measures are wholly welcome and will banish a grim shadow that has hung menacingly over hospitality since the Covid crisis began 15 months ago. The legislation will form a strong bedrock for negotiated and fair settlements that can help heal the damage that the pandemic has wrought, and is a hugely positive signal that the Government has been listening to our sector, and acted to ease its plight.

"Thankfully, many landlords and tenants have managed to come to an amicable arrangement over rent arrears, but many could not and the government's announcement brings in an equitable solution where there is a sharing of the pain.

"These are unprecedented measures but wholly merited and justified in these unprecedented times, bringing some stability back to an uncertain and unsettled property market. At last, this existential crisis for hospitality looks like reaching a fair conclusion, easing a path to recovery for a sector that can help the national economy back to prosperity."



# Occupancy, booking windows and feeder markets

There's no question about it, demand for travel is on the up. In their most recent research, the European Travel Commission reports that 72% of Europeans plan to travel between June and September.

**B**ut with the majority of typical hotspots yet to make the green list, the question becomes, how can hoteliers take advantage of available demand in the coming months? Using Amadeus Demand360® forward-looking hotel and flight data, we share the latest booking trends in the UK & Ireland, and what this means for hospitality.

## Comparing booking behaviour with 2019

If we take a look at current booking trends in the UK compared with 2019, there are clearly reasons to celebrate. Occupancy has recovered to more than half of 2019 levels during the latter weeks of May and into June, with highs of 51%. Since reopening began in April and May, this number has steadily grown, with occupancy in the UK averaging 23% in April.

As we look further out in the short-term, occupancy does dip. But this doesn't necessarily mean the demand isn't there. If we look at booking windows, 44% of bookings in the UK are still made within 0-7 days. In 2019, this figure was 38%, suggesting that, despite a growing desire, travellers are still opting for a more hesitant, wait and see approach. If we also compare current Average Daily Rate (ADR) with 2019, as of 6th June, ADR in the UK stood at \$126, compared with \$187 in 2019. As a hotelier, this provides two important insights. Firstly, don't drop rates as a way to secure bookings, because the growth in occupancy confirms that



the demand is there. Secondly, if you do drop rates, this will risk making it harder to recover the same rates as in 2019, as travellers come to expect discounts. Another important consideration here is the channel mix. One notable change compared with 2019, is a growth in the Online Travel Agency channel. As of June, 42% of bookings came from OTAs, compared with 29% in 2019. Direct bookings have also decreased as a result, down to 21% in 2021, versus 29% in 2019. Although a diverse channel mix is favorable in order to secure more

bookings, this drop in Direct bookings could impact on overall revenue. Take a look at our Direct Booking playbook for advice on how to address this.

Moving onto Ireland, there are clear differences in behaviour. Overall occupancy is due to hit mid-30s in June, with some regions recovering faster than others. For example, Demand360® data reports highs of 80% occupancy in Galway for July. Keep in mind that this data is not predictive but represents actual on-the-books reservations. Bookings in Ireland also show a longer



lead time overall than compared to the UK. 51% of bookings are currently made 31 days or more in advance, up 13% from 2019. For hoteliers, use this knowledge to think whether you could build any promotions to secure these further-out bookings. What about a long-weekend break in the Autumn months, or a special celebration for Christmas? As with the UK, consider how to build these without dropping prices. ADR in Ireland is still recovering compared with 2019, reaching highs of \$201 as of June 6th, compared with \$268 for the same time in 2019. Direct bookings are currently higher than 2019 (35% vs 31%) although bookings via OTAs have also grown. Keep an eye on this mix in order to drive more bookings through your most profitable channels.

### Which markets are driving demand?

As you continue to rebuild and capture business in the coming months, it will be important to understand which markets are influencing demand. In most markets globally, unsurprisingly, domestic travel continues to drive the majority of bookings. For example, in Portugal, despite a growth in bookings following their addition to the green list, only 15% of bookings came from the UK in the trailing 4 weeks as of mid-June. With quarantine mandatory for most markets, currently 76% of reservations in the UK are made domestically. However, Ireland tells a different story. Following the news that American tourists are welcome as of

July 19th, 34% of bookings in this market are currently coming from the U.S. This provides an important opportunity for hoteliers in Ireland. Consider directing any available ad spend to this market, in order to get your property seen – and booked. For the UK, continue to monitor feeder markets, to anticipate and adjust promotions ahead of the competition, for instance should the US and UK travel corridor go ahead.

If you're looking for further insight and guidance on what decisions to take in the areas of Operations, Sales, Marketing or Revenue Management, then visit the dedicated Amadeus Hospitality Rebuild Travel hub. You'll find a variety of resources, including brand new Rebuild Hospitality eBooks.

## OBITUARY

# In memory of Asheesh Raizada

The team at HOSPA was saddened to hear of the unexpected passing of Asheesh Raizada from Euronet.



**W**e were first introduced to Ash in early 2017 and he quickly became a familiar and reliably friendly face at HOSPA events. We are sure many of you will remember him as fondly as we do. Permanently smiling and with a healthy appetite for networking, Ash was a fabulous addition to HOSPA meetings. At our annual conference HOSPACE, we will not forget Ash generously offering glasses of champagne whilst he chatted and laughed with hoteliers and fellow suppliers to the industry. Euronet have been enthusiastic and valuable supporters of HOSPA for years now, but Ash was more than a client and sponsor, he was a friend and unfailingly fantastic company. Usually over lunch and with a glass of wine, he would talk fondly of his family, discuss the

hospitality industry and share his passion for luxury watches and holidays!

Euronet encouraged clients and potential clients to attend our events, we loved working with Ash and the team. We introduced him to many people and he returned the favour time and time again. HOSPA and Euronet jointly hosted dinners for Finance Directors which were both informative and guaranteed to be a lot of fun. Simon Auld - Ash's boss - remembers his outgoing personality as infectious and he described Ash's unexpected passing as a tragedy, which it certainly is.

We will miss him so much.

Ash leaves behind a devastated wife and two young children. If you would like to contribute to his memorial fund, please see <https://www.gofundme.com/f/ash-raizada-memorial-fund>

# Rebuild & Reinspire

Hosted by Harri, the Rebuild & Reinspire Hospitality Recruitment Summit was a virtual event comprising three sessions that directly addressed the ongoing staffing crisis in the hospitality industry.

**F**or the first session, Louise Gallant, Community & Events Director at Harri, met with Kate Nicholls, CEO of UKHospitality, James Godwin, Resources & Administration Director at Harbour Hotels Group, Matt Hudson, People Director at Wagamama, Alex Reilley, Co-Founder and Executive Chairman at Loungers, and Nisha Katona, Founder, and CEO of Mowgli Street Food, to discuss the best ways to attract people back into the sector. Read on to find out what was covered.

## By the numbers: COVID-19's impact on hospitality

Kate Nicholls kicked off the summit by outlining the devastating effects of COVID-19 on the hospitality sector, "since the financial crash, we've generated 1 in 6 of net new jobs each and every year, and invested £10 billion...that positive statement was absolutely devastated as a result of COVID. We are now a third of the size that we were in 2020."

Nicholls continued to explain how the hard-hit industry has experienced a "28% drop in headcount," with 660,000 fewer people now working in the sector.

Based on these numbers alone, it's clear that if the hospitality industry wants to recover from the catastrophic effects of the pandemic, something needs to change.

## Operators face recruitment challenges

Brexit, fears over the vaccine rollout, and growing uncertainty surrounding the new variants of COVID-19 have all created difficulties for hospitality & leisure operators.

According to Kate Nicholls, 50% of operators say they've experienced labour shortages, as well as challenges when recruiting and getting hold of the right people. And, even though around 85% of those on furlough are expected

to return to the industry, the uncertainty around what will happen on 21st June is causing a lot of nervousness.

## Labour shortages aren't slowing down

The panelists came together to discuss the effects of labour shortages on their businesses. James Godwin, from Harbour Hotels Group, expressed that, like other operators, he wasn't sure how many furloughed workers would come back. So, when the majority of staff did return, Harbour Hotels Group found itself having to be more flexible, which created recruitment challenges.

Interestingly, James explained that Harbour Hotels Group recently posted a receptionist role; one in Richmond and one in Cornwall. The Cornwall post received 12 applications whilst the Richmond post attracted 500 applications. Therefore they are introducing ways of using Richmond to fuel talent in other areas and considering relocation packages.

And, while the sector as a whole is facing issues, Alex Reilley from Loungers recognised that there are regional hotspots where recruiting is certainly difficult. He said, "it isn't just about not necessarily being able to find the people, it's being able to find people that can then afford to stay in the towns you're trying to recruit."

The question is: how do operators overcome the challenges of COVID-19 and Brexit? Our panelists considered just that.

## Collaboration is key

Kate Nicholls expressed that in order to recover from the effects of the ongoing pandemic, operators need to maintain the collaborative approach they've developed throughout the crisis. Alex supported this point, explaining how the pandemic is a "good opportunity to collaboratively

understand, appreciate and put in place a 21st-century hospitality blueprint."

## A reset moment for the hospitality industry

The ongoing pandemic has affected almost every role in hospitality, which is why many operators think we should use it as a reset moment. Kate believes the industry shouldn't go back to business as usual. Instead, operators should think creatively about hours, shift patterns, and staff benefits to attract new talent.

That's not all - she mentioned that we need to think differently about the way we construct jobs and training, as well as the support we give to people during these uncertain times.

## Advice for operators going forward

While many operators are putting initiatives in place to attract people to the industry, the panelists agreed that transparency, honesty, and openness around the roles and expectations are key.

Additionally, Nisha Katona believes that the hospitality industry needs to aim for more than a gateway to employment, "I gave up my career to come to what I think is an incredibly exciting industry. That's how we want our people to feel." She went on to say, "a lot of your resources have to go into how do you make that the most delicious environment to work in."

And James agreed, noting that "laying out great career paths with fantastic opportunities for people" has to be the way forward. To achieve this and ensure future success, it's important not to just look at the short term (filling gaps), but the longer term too.

### Written by:

Louise Gallant, Community & Events Director at Harri. [www.Harri.com](http://www.Harri.com)

# You don't have to lift the whole elephant

Maintaining a competitive edge forces hospitality organisations to take a serious look at their technology and environment.

**H**ospitality business software systems such as a hotel property management, revenue management, sales and catering/events management might all be on the table and central to those discussions. Investing in a whole new hospitality software platform all at once is a heavy lift, especially during periods of budgetary austerity.

So, what are the most efficient and cost-effective ways to approach investing in new software? How do you meet current and future business needs without trying to lift the whole elephant? Here are four points that help you create a practical decision-making framework.

## 1. Define your immediate goals

When you're overwhelmed by the prospect of a complete technology overhaul, determining your key priorities is always a good place to start. What are your top five objectives that you know hospitality business software can help you address? What does success look like after that? It helps to be very specific.

For instance, you may be looking to improve how competitive your pricing is in a certain region or market segment. Maybe you just need a better process to manage hotel outlets and facilities, to improve guest service and maximise revenue. Or you may be looking at ways to monetise your properties' outdoor spaces for events. Instead of solving every problem

your business faces, use your defined objectives and ideal outcomes as a horizon line when you're looking for new solutions.

## 2. Seek collaborators who understand what you're trying to do

Sometimes it's easy to forget that you don't have to do this all yourself. When looking to meet your immediate business goals, who are the best people who understand the ins and outs of what you're trying to accomplish as an organisation? What can they contribute to discussions around how new hospitality business software can help achieve your objectives? What positive and negative implications might you be missing that they can help you identify?

Forming teams, gathering intelligence, running scenarios, fleshing out roadmaps, and generally getting buy-in from your organisation's experts provides a vital sanity check. This can help you to determine resource allocation more intelligently, focus on development in a more considered way, lighten the lift, and perhaps help you save some money as well.

## 3. Think 'modular' and think 'cloud'

Challenges are best approached in manageable and achievable stages. The best hospitality software solutions are modular enough to help you deploy according to your priorities. They

integrate in the cloud and are easily implemented via SaaS. They're compatible with each other as soon as you're ready to add them to your stack as new business needs emerge.

Cloud hospitality technology is a solid foundation for building goal-specific functionality on a scalable platform as your plans require. When your team has outlined the business needs that really move the performance needle and you've prioritised the solutions, figuring out what square one looks like becomes much clearer to you.

## 4. Don't break your back

You don't have to solve every problem at once; lifting elephants will only give you a sore back. Instead, devise a multi-step plan that builds on successive successes that lead to your ultimate goal:

- Be specific and realistic about objectives, priorities and constraints
- Be collaborative to make sure your goals make sense to the organisation
- Be focused on building your platform sequentially, using the cloud as a scalable platform

This method provides a solid framework to help you meet urgent challenges while gearing up to be ready for the ones yet to come... and with no heavy lifting required.

### Where are you right now in your journey?

What are your priorities right now to meet a specific set of business goals? We're interested to hear your story. We invite you to talk to us at Infor.

<https://www.infor.com/en-gb/industries/hotels-resorts>

When your team has outlined the business needs that really move the performance needle and you've prioritised the solutions, figuring out what square one looks like becomes much clearer to you.

# Predictions for 2021 and beyond

Kirsty Beasley, Market Development Manager at Profitroom spoke with Pamela Carvell, the Life President of the Hotel Marketing Association, to see what hoteliers can expect from wellness trends and guest package choices as we move into late 2021 and beyond. Here's what she found.

With COVID-19 restrictions gradually lifting, hotels and resorts across the country are moving into the traditional peak of the summer season. But whilst high season for many, it's not so easy for others to attract trade. After all, not every hotel is blessed with sun, sea and sand within easy reach. Those hotels not found on the coast often need to work a little harder, tapping into the relevant trends and guest preferences to make their offering that little bit more attractive. Pamela Carvell tells us some of her predictions.

## Personalisation

Regardless of your hotel's location, listening to guests and acting accordingly is one of the best ways to boost conversion. Discussing guest behaviour patterns post-lockdown, Pamela said: "There's now a section of people who want no-touch treatments because of everything we've been through over the past year. Additionally, we can expect to see an increase in spa suites; personal treatment rooms located within hotel bedrooms, designed to avoid close contact with other hotel guests."

She continued: "Having spent so much time outdoors, many guests are now looking for experiences that integrate mindfulness and meditation, such as outdoor yoga and pilates classes. Hotels can achieve this kind of personalisation by asking guests to complete pre-stay questionnaires; specifying anything from favourite foods, right down to details on the music they'd like in their therapy room!"

## Boosting spa and leisure conversions

Pamela advises designing guest stays around their body clock; including booking treatments at a time to suit a guest's natural rhythms.

To do this, hoteliers can use automated guest messaging to communicate with guests pre-stay, specifying any details or preferences in advance. Sophisticated systems, such as Profitroom's, also allow hotels to personalise upselling opportunities – and in the case of spa and leisure facilities, allow for pricing and treatment lists to be attached, before following up with reminders and tailored offers.

Using alert features, hoteliers can also use the booking engine to send more information about spa and leisure facilities to those interested.

Examples include Boringdon Hall, a leisure hotel in Plymouth, which uses Profitroom's booking engine to display its wide range of packages at the point of booking, presenting guests with opportunities to upgrade with spa, dining and seasonal bundles. Package information is available at their fingertips, which, combined with easy-to-spot price lists, means there's no need for the user to leave the page.

St Michael's Resort, a leisure hotel in Falmouth, takes a similar approach to

booking, displaying upgrade opportunities in thumbnail. Using this format, guests can see prices, availability, special conditions and included offers without having to navigate away.

## The booking journey

Through guest data, leisure and spa hotels can also gather details about a potential customer's booking journey – retargeting those who may have abandoned the cycle too soon. Profitroom's booking engine allows hotels to send personalised automation, as well as enabling guest segmentation to specifically target those interested in spa/leisure experiences.

## A holistic spa experience

According to Pamela, hotels haven't adapted wellness offerings much despite the pandemic. She hopes though that spas will start putting food and nutrition first. Rather than opting for afternoon teas or burger and chips, Pamela would like to see guests being educated about the benefits of a balanced diet: "Gut health impacts mental health. Serotonin is made in the gut, which is the happy hormone. I would love to see hotels and spas embracing that knowledge. A holistic approach must include healthy eating to have people feeling great. Hotels could also tailor guest experiences to different ages and lifestyles too, using pre-stay assessments to gather knowledge about individuals."

## More in-room service

The pandemic will likely cause an increase in in-room experiences, says Pamela: "We'll

Gut health impacts mental health. Serotonin is made in the gut, which is the happy hormone.



see a broader base of in-room offerings in hotels. Now, it's a basic room service menu. What we'll start to see is more things being delivered and more hotels creating spa suites. Most people want to hug others, but some will be fearful and will want to spend more time in their room. This helps to accommodate different guest preferences."

## Creatively using empty spaces

A consequence of the pandemic has seen many previously vibrant hotel spaces left empty. Looking at how hotels can use them, Pamela said: "Some of the big chains have been saying that meetings and events won't succeed post-COVID now Zoom has become so popular. Hotels will have lots of empty spaces – but they can be clever with them. They could create cosy, designated private lounges for guests to enjoy at their leisure, with a room service menu and great WiFi signal."

## Encouraging wellness amongst staff

Of course, hotels can't meet guests' wellness needs if staff aren't properly trained. One of Pamela's latest projects looks to enhance the mental and physical health of hotel employees, using a training programme focusing on:

1. Nutrition;
2. Calmness and happiness;
3. Managing fear, change and time;
4. Great communications.

With the programme created pre-COVID, its aim is to enhance mindfulness support, which many hotels were beginning to offer staff: "I'm relaunching this because I think there's going to be a huge need where employees have been on furlough for over a year and may be nervous about being back with people again. People may also be worried about going to city centres. Rural hotels will be chock-a-block,

and employees will suddenly be under a lot of pressure."

## Sustainable wellness

While there's increased awareness around personal health and wellbeing, sustainability continues to be highly topical – and hoteliers should keep it in mind and look to make a difference by swapping plastic toiletries for biodegradable packaging and reducing energy consumption by cutting down laundry (with guest permission).

To summarise then, hotels can anticipate increased demand for improvement and consideration in their approach to overall wellness – with post-pandemic health concerns playing a large part. From improved guest personalisation to staff wellness, we expect to see a transformation in the spa and wellness industry.

For more information on Profitroom, please visit <https://www.profitroom.com/>

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# No more single serve

Water bottles, disposable toiletries, plastic bags, bin liners, food packaging and cups are among the biggest plastic polluters - Rethinking single-use plastic products requires collaboration from all stakeholders.

**T**he World Travel & Tourism Council and the United Nations Environment Programme have launched a new report addressing the complex issue of single-use plastic products within Travel & Tourism.

'Rethinking Single-Use Plastic Products in Travel & Tourism' launches as countries around the world begin to reopen, and the Travel & Tourism sector starts to show signs of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic which has been devastating.

The report is a first step to mapping single-use plastic products across the Travel & Tourism value chain, identifying hotspots for environmental leakages, and providing practical and strategic recommendations for businesses and policymakers.

It is intended to help stakeholders take collective steps towards coordinated actions and policies that drive a shift towards reduce and reuse models, in line with circularity principles, as well as current and future waste infrastructures.

The report's recommendations include redefining unnecessary single-use plastic products in the context of one's own business; giving contractual preference to suppliers of reusable products; proactively planning procedures that avoid a return to single-use plastic products in the event of disease outbreaks; supporting research

and innovation in product design and service models that decrease the use of plastic items, and revising policies and quality standards with waste reduction, and circularity in mind.

Virginia Messina, Senior Vice President and Acting CEO, WTTC said: "WTTC is proud to release this important high-level report for the sector, focusing on sustainability and reducing waste from single-use plastic products in Travel & Tourism.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the sustainability agenda with businesses and policymakers now putting an even stronger focus on it. As a growing priority, businesses are expected to continue to reduce single-use plastic products waste for the future and drive circularity to protect not only our people, but importantly, our planet.

"It is also becoming clear that consumers are making more conscious choices, and increasingly supporting businesses with sustainability front of mind."

Single-use plastic products can be a threat to the environment and human health and without deliberate effort across the sector, Travel & Tourism can and will contribute significantly to the issue.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had both negative and positive impacts on single-use plastics pollution.

The demand for single-use plastics items has increased with safety being a high concern among tourists and take-away services being on the rise. According to the Thailand Environment Institute, plastic waste has increased from 1,500 tons to a staggering 6,300 tons per day, owing to soaring home deliveries of food.

However, the pandemic has also catalysed consumer demand for green tourism experiences around the world, with a 2019 global study\* finding 82% of respondents are aware of plastic waste and are already taking practical actions to tackle pollution.

The report recognises that global solutions are required to address corporate concerns about the use of single-use plastic products. It aims to support informed decision making based on the potential impacts of trade-offs and of unintended burden shifting when considering the transition to sustainable alternatives.

Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director of the Economy Division, UNEP said: "Travel & Tourism has a key role to play in addressing the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, as well as making circularity in the use of plastics a reality.

"The advent of COVID-19 and consequent proliferation of single-use plastic products has added urgency to the crises. With this report, we hope to encourage stakeholders in this industry to come together to address this multifaceted challenge. Only by doing so, can we ensure meaningful and durable change."

With around 90% of ocean plastic derived from land-based sources and the annual damage of plastics to marine ecosystems amounting to \$13bn per year, proactively addressing the challenge of plastics within the Travel & Tourism sector is key.

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the sustainability agenda with businesses and policymakers now putting an even stronger focus on it. As a growing priority, businesses are expected to continue to reduce single-use plastic products waste for the future and drive circularity to protect not only our people, but importantly, our planet. It is also becoming clear that consumers are making more conscious choices, and increasingly supporting businesses with sustainability front of mind.

# Delivery and takeaway sales still booming

May's delivery and takeaway sales at Britain's leading restaurant and pub groups were 273% higher than in May 2019, CGA's latest Hospitality at Home Tracker reveals.

**T**he figure is down on the Tracker's 2021-on-2019 growth of 345% in April, following the reopening of hospitality for inside service in the second half of May. However, it indicates that deliveries and takeaways are certain to remain a much more significant element of

groups' operations than they were before COVID-19.

CGA's Hospitality at Home Tracker shows growth in delivery sales was more than twice as high as takeaways, thanks in large part to the rising popularity of third party delivery platforms. Combined, they accounted for nearly half (49.7%)

of restaurant and pub groups' sales in May, with eat-in contributing the remainder (50.3%).

"While many consumers seized the chance to eat out again, hospitality's reopening for inside service isn't diminishing the appeal of deliveries and takeaways," said Karl Chessell, CGA's business unit director - hospitality operators and food, EMEA.

"With the quality and convenience of at-home ordering rising, the lockdowns of the last 15 months have firmly embedded it in people's habits. It will be fascinating to see where the balance of eating-out and ordering-in settles as COVID-19 restrictions loosen."

CGA's Hospitality at Home Tracker is the leading source of data and insight for the delivery and takeaway market. It provides monthly reports on the value and volume of sales, with year-on-year comparisons and splits between food and drink revenue. It offers a benchmark by which brands can measure their performance, and participants receive detailed data in return for their contributions.

CGA collected sales figures directly from 17 out of the 22 leading companies participating. Participants include: Azzurri Group, BrewDog plc, Burger King UK, Byron, Drake & Morgan, Fazenda, Four Side Vegan Pizza, Gaucho Grill, Giggling Squid, Honest Burgers Ltd, Nando's Restaurants, Peach Pub Company, Pizza Express, Pizza Hut UK, Prezzo, Rosa's Thai, TGI Fridays UK, The Restaurant Group, Tortilla, Upham Pub Company, Wagamama and YO! Sushi.



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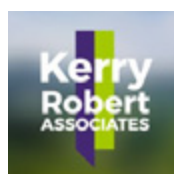
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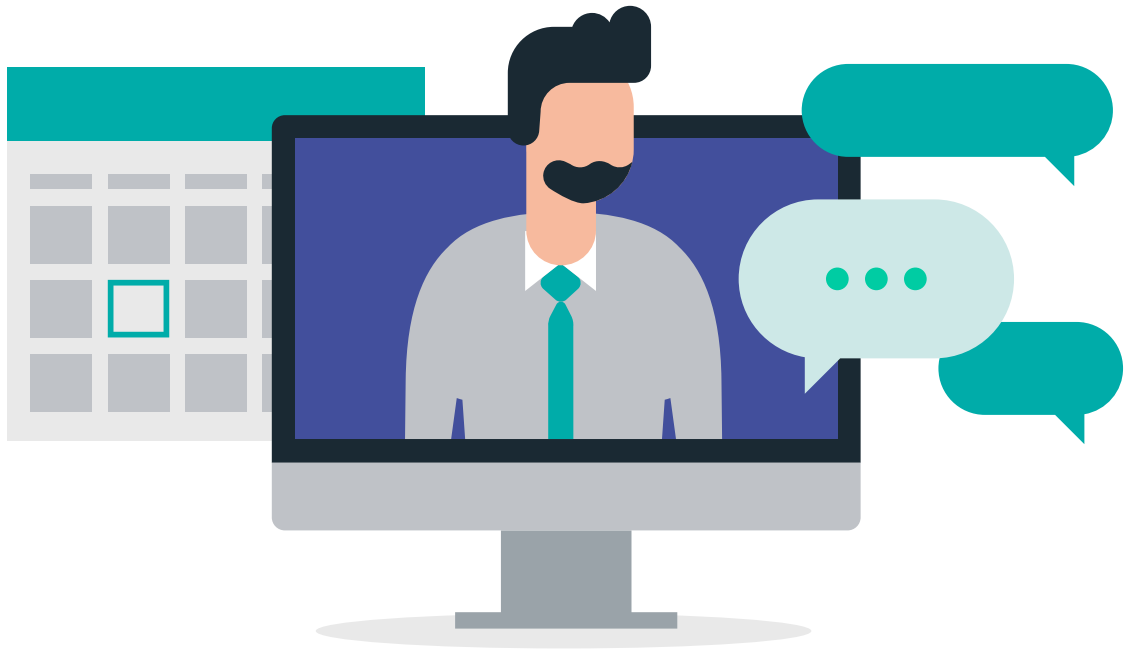


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