

# 8 Ways to Prepare for a Tourism Disaster Before it Happens

What you need to know to protect your business



**UPRIGHT  
POSITION**

Communications

## #1 – Recognize that disasters can be temporary

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Thanks to social media, lower traveler risk thresholds and recognition that tourism is a driving economic force, tourism recovery following a disaster now can take weeks instead of years when managed properly. This can only happen with a concerted plan, tourism bodies and companies working together and a good understanding of your traveller source markets.

## #2 – Find reliable tourism data sources

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When facing the aftermath of a natural disaster, having reliable data that reveals visitor trends pre- and post-disaster will help you quickly rebuild. Tourism bodies, private companies and industry groups are invaluable data sources, but be sure to seek out unconventional data sources that are reliable and detailed.

## #3 – Communicate with your key constituents

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Existing customers, frequent visitors and those who follow you on social media are a captive audience most likely to spread the word of your destination's recovery. Communicate with them early and often, with sincerity and honesty.

## #4 – Market the opportunity when possible

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Certain disasters can't be marketed, but as we saw with the Napa earthquake, there are marketing opportunities where you can celebrate what you've been through and market that celebration as a badge of honor and a marketing platform to build upon.

## #5 – Use the media to your advantage

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The media want a good story to tell, so give them one that shows what you've been through and, most importantly, that you're recovering and open for business.

## #6 – Embrace sense of community

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Where you are located is part of the appeal of why visitors come to you. Embrace that sense of community in times of recovery. Work closely with local tourism and industry bodies to be a part of their marketing plans. Additionally, find a good data source that shows where recovery is coming from and where work needs to be done in terms of attracting visitors.

## #7 – Realize that perception will keep more visitors away than reality

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Visual images of disasters on TV and on YouTube last a long time. Frequent, accurate communication will help dispel inaccurate perceptions, but that outreach needs to be across multiple media channels: traditional media, social media and your own usual methods of outreach.

## #8 – By being proactive, travelers can be quick to return

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You have a unique tourism product. If you're open for business, following a natural disaster, travelers will continue to seek out the experience you provide. By understanding where and how the recovery can occur, your tourism product can thrive.

## About Paul Wilke

With feet-on-the-ground experience working on both US coasts and in Asia, Paul Wilke specializes in global tourism PR with a focus on telling compelling stories, garnering on-message media coverage and providing sound strategic communications counsel.

Paul's strongest passion is in the area of travel and tourism. Throughout his career, he has specialized in public relations, public affairs and government relations around the economic impact tourism can make on an economy. Paul has worked closely with organizations like the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and Greenerth.travel. From 2008 to 2011, Paul served on President Obama's Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB) and from 2005 to 2007, Paul was a board member of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

## About Upright Position Communications

Any good PR firm promises writing, media outreach and streamlined communications. Few actually deliver. At Upright, we take a passionate approach to PR, working only with clients who recognize the value of communications. Where we excel is in making sure our services work in harmony to create a communications platform that is sustainable and builds on momentum.

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